ECOND LETTER,

Containing

EMARKS

On a Late

AMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

ianity not founded on Argument.

JOHN LELAND, D. D.

THOR of *An Answer to Christianity as Old as the Creation*, by Dr. *Tindal*;

AND

Divine Authority of the Old and New Testament ... ted, &c. against *The Moral Philosopher*.

LONDON:

for R. HETT, at the *Bible* and *Crown*, in the ... And Sold by J. STAGG, in *Westminster-Hall*. M. DCC. XLIV.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

BOOKS *Printed for* R. Hett, *at the* Bible *and* Crown *in the* Poultry.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I. contains,

1. DIſcourſes concerning the Being and Natural Perfections of God, in which that firſt Principle of Religion, the Exiſtence of the Deity, is prov'd, from the Frame of the material World, from the animal and rational Life, and from human Intelligence and Morality. And the Divine Attributes of Spirituality, Unity, Eternity, Immenſity, Omnipotence, Omniſcience, and infinite Wiſdom, are explain'd.

VOL. II. contains,

Diſcourſes concerning the Perfections of God; in which his Holineſs, Goodneſs, and other moral Attributes, are explained and proved; the Foundations of true Religion, conſiſting in the Fear and Love of God, in Obedience to, and Truſt in him, are illuſtrated, and eſtabliſhed. By *John Abernethy*, M. A.

2. The Chriſtian Oratory; or, the ordinary and extraordinary Devotion of the Cloſet. Diſplay'd under the following Heads, *viz.* The Place of Retirement, and the Work to be done there. Of Reading the Scriptures, and of Meditation. Of Self-Examination, and of Prayer, and the Time of Retirement. The Duty of ſecret Worſhip prov'd. Of Faſting, Thankſgiving, and ejaculatory Prayer. Of joining in Publick Prayer. Of the Unity of the Church. Of the Exaltation of Chriſt. Of receiving Evil as well as Good at the Hand of the Lord. Of Charity. By *Benjamin Bennet*. In two Volumes Octavo, the third Edition of the firſt Volume, Price 6s. The ſecond Edition of the Second, Price 4s. They may be had ſeparate.

3. Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Chriſt, and on the Evidence of his glorious Goſpel. Preach'd at *Northampton*, by *P. Doddridge*, D. D. The ſecond Edition with Additions.

4. Three Letters to a Deiſt. 1. Demanding his Warrant for eating of Fleſh. 2. Repreſenting his want of much uſeful Knowledge. 3. Arguing the unexceptionable Integrity of the Great Founder of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, and his immediate Accomplices.

5. Inquiries concerning the State and Oeconomy of the Angelical Worlds.

6.

6. Zeal a Virtue: or a Diſcourſe concerning ſacred Zeal.

Theſe three by *John Reynolds.*

7. The Primitive Doctrine of Chriſt's Divinity; or a Specimen of a full View of the Ante-Nicene Doctrine, in an Eſſay on *Irenæus.* Wherein all the deciſive Paſſages are collected and methodized: The Senſe of diſputed Expreſſions enquired into and determin'd: The Principles into which his Reaſonings are reſolv'd, extracted, and improv'd, for clearing up his Scheme; and his Conſiſtency with himſelf is demonſtrated. By *John Alexander.*

8. A new Eſſay on Civil Power in Things ſacred; or an Enquiry after an eſtabliſh'd Religion conſiſtent with the juſt Liberties of Mankind, and practicable under every Form of Civil Government.

And all Things whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them. Matth. vii. 12.

9. A Vindication of the Scripture-Doctrine of original Sin, from Mr. *John Taylor*'s free and candid Examination of it. Price 1s. 6d.

10. A new and full Method of ſettling the Canonical Authority of the New Teſtament. Wherein all the antient Teſtimonies concerning this Argument are produced; the ſeveral Apocryphal Books which have been thought Canonical by any Writers collected, with an *Engliſh* Tranſlation of each of them; together with a particular Proof that none of them were ever admitted into the Canon, and a full Anſwer to thoſe who have endeavour'd to recommend them as ſuch. In three Volumes bound in two, with Alphabetical Indexes.

11. A Vindication of the former Part of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, from Mr. *Whiſton*'s Charge of Diſlocations; or an Attempt to prove that the preſent *Greek* Copies of that Goſpel, are in the ſame Order, wherein they were originally written by that Evangeliſt. In which are contain'd many Things relating to the Harmony and Hiſtory of the four Goſpels. Theſe two by *Jerem. Jones.*

12. Some Thoughts concerning the Proofs of a future State from Reaſon. By the late learned Mr. *Hen. Greve.*

REMARKS on a late Pamphlet, entitled, Chriſtianity not founded on Argument, *&c.*

LETTER II.

SIR,

IT is a ſatisfaction to me, that my former Letter was not diſpleaſing to you; in which, in obedience to your Commands, I communicated to you ſome Remarks that occurred to me upon the Pamphlet that has made ſo much noiſe, *Chriſtianity not founded on Argument.*

In that Letter, after having made ſome general Remarks on the Nature and Tendency of this Pamphlet, I applied my ſelf particularly to conſider the firſt Part of it; in which the Author propoſes to ſhew, that "Reaſon or the Intellectual "Faculty could not poſſibly, both from its own "Nature and that of Religion, be the Principle "intended by God to lead us into a true Faith." Or, in other Words, for this is evidently his Meaning, that God never intended we ſhould make uſe of our Reaſon or Intellectual Faculty in believing, or that our Faith ſhould be founded upon any Evidence that might convince the Underſtanding.

In the ſucceeding Parts of his Pamphlet, he propoſes to prove the ſame thing from Scripture, and to ſhew what is the true Principle of Faith that is there aſſigned.

The firſt thing he offers from Scripture to ſhew that Faith has nothing to do with the Underſtanding, or as he expreſſes it, *p.* 35. that *no Appeal to the Underſtanding was ever made or intended,* is drawn from thoſe Expreſſions, "leſt they ſhould "underſtand with their Hearts——their fooliſh "Heart was darkned——Purified their Hearts by "Faith—" which *Expreſſions*, he obſerves, *are applicable with no Propriety to the Intellectual Faculty, but are evidently deſcriptive of the Will only* *. But a very moderate Acquaintance with the ſacred Writings may ſatisfy any Man, that the Heart is in Scripture-Language often put for the Underſtanding or Intellectual Faculty †. And as to the particular Paſſages referred to by this Writer, that Phraſe of *underſtanding with the Heart* cannot be underſtood ſo as to exclude the intellectual Faculty, but neceſſarily ſuppoſes it. And when it is ſaid of the *Heathens*, that their *fooliſh Heart was darkned*, it is plain this is deſigned to ſignify, that their Underſtanding was darkned, and had not a juſt Knowledge and Diſcernment of Things; tho' it is there alſo ſuppoſed, that the Depravity of their Will and moral Diſpoſitions had a great Influence in corrupting their Judgment. And that Expreſſion of *purifying the Heart by Faith* ſhews indeed that Faith where it is ſincere and of the right kind has a purifying Influence on the Temper and

* P. 36. † 2 Chron. i. 10, 12. Job xxxviii. 36. Eccleſ. viii. 5.

and Diſpoſition of the Soul; but how it can be concluded from thence, that Faith is not a rational Thing, or has nothing to do with the Underſtanding, I cannot ſee.

But our Author chuſes rather to *enlarge upon a Particular, which appears to him entirely controvertible, and that is, the plain narrative Part of the Hiſtory, as far as it relates to the Buſineſs of planting the Goſpel, and the Manner by which it was attempted**.

Some things that he obſerves upon this Narrative will be eaſily granted him, as, That *Chriſt taught* his Diſciples and the People *as one having Authority*, and that he *conſidered himſelf as the Perſon he was, or one who derived from Heaven the Inſtructions he was communicating*. That he did not deal with his Diſciples in a way of *Sophiſtry and Syllogiſm*. That neither he nor his Apoſtles attempted to prove every ſingle Doctrine they taught, or Precept they delivered, by entering into a tedious Diſcuſſion, or by a long Train of laborious Reaſonings, after the manner of the Schools. But it by no means follows, that becauſe *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles did not convert Men by arguing with them in a philoſophical way, which would have made but little Impreſſion on the Generality of Mankind, who either have not capacity to underſtand, or leiſure to attend to a Courſe of nice and ſubtil Argumentation, that therefore they expected or required Men to believe without any Reaſon or Evidence at all, which is the Repreſentation this Gentleman is pleaſed to make of it. On

* P. 36.

the contrary, it is manifeſt from the Account given us in Scripture, that as they propoſed the Doctrines and Laws they delivered to Mankind, in the Name and as by the Authority of God himſelf, which gave them another kind of Force than the mere Reaſonings of Philoſophers would have done; ſo they gave the World the moſt convincing Proofs that they were indeed ſent of God, and that they received the Doctrines and Laws they delivered, by Revelation from him. In which caſe Reaſon and common Senſe directed Men to believe thoſe Doctrines and ſubmit to thoſe Laws. For it is the Voice of Nature and Reaſon, that if God gives a Revelation to Mankind, what is there taught and enjoined, ought to be believed and received upon his Authority, provided we have ſufficient Proofs to convince us that ſuch a Revelation came from God.

But to return to our Author's Account of the Goſpel-Narrative, the Sum of it is this; That *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles required Men to believe at once without Reaſon or Evidence, and pronounced Damnation againſt them if they did not. That *Chriſt* did not *lay the Proofs of his Miſſion frankly before his Diſciples, nor give them time calmly to conſider them*; and that he refuſed to *explain himſelf* to them when they wanted it, and diſcouraged their *Enquiries*. That he required thoſe that came to him to be healed, to believe before he healed them, which plainly ſhews, that *the Conviction was to precede the Evidence, as the Terms of the Favour to be conſequently conferred* *. That he ever

* P. 36, 37.

ever diſclaimed with the utmoſt Reſentment ſuch Followers as were deſirous to canvaſs the Evidence, and diſcouraged no Temper with ſo conſtant an Averſion, as that of ſeeking a Sign *. And whereas it might be alledged, that he produced his Miracles as Evidences of his divine Miſſion, our Author affirms and endeavours after his Manner to ſhew, that he had *no Intention to prove his Truth and Character* by thoſe Works †. That he both *expected* and *accepted the ſudden Converſion of many upon little or no ſeeming Evidence*; and nothing was of *greater Merit* than an *extempore Subſcription*. And that he *rejected ſome Perſons immediately when they had not Minds prepared to believe at once, and gave them up inſtantly to the Hardneſs of their Hearts without Remedy* ‖. That the Apoſtles did all *along tread punctually in their Maſter's Steps, inſiſting conſtantly on the ready Acknowledgement of their Doctrines, without any Conceſſions of Time for Doubt or Deliberation*. And that *of the Terms of the Covenant one Declaration was often thought ſufficient, and the leaſt ſtanding off gave up the Unbeliever to Reprobation* ‡. That it was required of thoſe to whom the Goſpel was preached, that *they ſhould not one Moment withhold their Aſſent*, and that the Apoſtles very *juſtly expected to make their Converts with a Word's ſpeaking* **. That their Office was only to *circulate their Creeds; they were not ſent to diſpute, but to preach*. And that in like manner the *Directions* they gave to *their deputed Succeſſors* was not to

* P. 38, 49. † P. 48—50. ‖ P. 37, 65, 66, 67. ‡ P. 38. ** P. 42

to *confute* or *argue* with thoſe whom they were to receive to the Faith *.

Such is the Repreſentation this Gentleman is pleaſed to make, and which he pretends is plain from the ſacred Hiſtory, of the Method made uſe of by our Saviour and his Apoſtles in *planting the Goſpel*. Let us now ſee from *Chriſt*'s own Declarations, and from the Hiſtory of the Goſpel and the Acts of the Apoſtles, whether this Account be true. After which I ſhall take notice, as far as it may be neceſſary, of the Inſtances produced by this Writer to ſupport the Account he gives.

With regard to our Saviour himſelf, he was ſo far from requiring Men to believe on his bare Word without Proof, that he declared, *if I bear witneſs of my ſelf*, that is, if I have no other Evidence but my bare Word, *my Witneſs is not* true †. He encouraged Examination and Enquiry, *Search the Scriptures*, ſaid he to the *Jews*, *for they are they which teſtify of me* ‖. Inſtead of forbidding them to judge fairly and impartially, and to uſe their Underſtandings, he expoſtulates with them for not doing ſo. *Why even of your ſelves judge ye not that which is right? Judge not according to Appearance, but judge righteous Judgment* **. The Faith he approves is founded in the Underſtanding. He deſcribes the good Hearer of the Word to be one that *heareth the Word and underſtandeth it, which alſo beareth Fruit* ‡. In his Diſcourſe to the *Jews*, he frequently appeals to the illuſtrious Atteſtations that were given him, and the

* P. 39, 40. † John v. 31. ‖ John v. 39. ** Luke xii. 54–57. John vii. 24. ‡ Matt. xiii. 23.

the manifeſt Proofs he exhibited of his divine *Miſſion*. Thus, after having ſpoken of the remarkable Teſtimony given him by *John* the Baptiſt, he adds, *but I have a greater Witneſs than that of* John: *for the Works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame Works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me* *. And again, *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him* †. And, ſpeaking of the *Jews* and *Phariſees* that did not believe in him, he ſaith, *If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had Sin, but now they have no Cloke for their Sin*; and then adds, *If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had Sin* ‖. Where he evidently ſuppoſes, that his Works bore Teſtimony to his Doctrine and divine Miſſion; and that they were Proofs ſo ſtrong and convincing, as left them utterly without Excuſe in their Unbelief. And this may help us to judge of the Sincerity and Candour of this Writer, who confidently affirms, in expreſs Contradiction to our Saviour's own Declarations, that he had not *any ſuch Meaning or Intention to convince Perſons*, or *to prove his own Truth and Character by his Works*; and inſinuates, that he was not *ſollicitous to gain Proſelytes by ſuch Means*, and was *conſcious he had nothing of that kind to produce*. P. 49, 50.

What

* John v. 36, 37. † John x. 24, 37, 38. xiv. 10, 11.
‖ John xv. 22, 24.

What the Method was that was taken after our Lord's Aſcenſion to propagate the Chriſtian Faith, we have a full Account in the Acts of the Apoſtles. That Book opens with an admirable Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle *Peter* to the *Jews* on the Day of Pentecoſt, in which he reaſons ſtrongly from the holy Scriptures, and from the extraordinary divine Atteſtations given from Heaven, to convince the *Jews*, that *Jeſus*, whom they had crucified, was Lord and Chriſt. And we have an Account of ſeveral other excellent Diſcourſes of his in that ſacred Book. Concerning *Stephen* the firſt Martyr, we are told, that as he *did great Wonders and Miracles among the People*, ſo when ſeveral of the *Jews diſputed with him, they were not able to reſiſt the Spirit and Wiſdom, with which he ſpake* *. He was therefore able to give good Reaſons for the Faith, and ſuch as they could not confute. St. *Paul laboured more abundantly* than any of the other Apoſtles in ſpreading the Faith of the Goſpel, and what his uſual manner was we are informed *Acts* xvii. 2, 3. where we are told, that at *Theſſalonica*, *Paul, as his manner was, went into the Synagogue of the* Jews, *and three Sabbath-days he reaſoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the Dead, and that this* Jeſus, *whom I preach unto you, is the Chriſt.* Here it is plain, quite contrary to the Repreſentation made by our Author, that his manner of making Converts was not to urge them to believe without a Reaſon for it, but ſtrongly to reaſon with them, in

* Acts vi. 9, 10.

in order to convince them. The Account that is there given of the *Beræans* is very remarkable. *Paul* and *Silas* went into the Synagogue to preach to them, and reaſon with them, as they had done at *Theſſalonica*. And it is obſerved by the ſacred Hiſtorian, that *they were more noble than thoſe at* Theſſalonica, *in that they received the Word with all Readineſs of Mind*; that is, without Prejudice, and with Minds open to Conviction, *and ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe Things were ſo.* And what was the Conſequence? *Therefore many of them believed* *. Here it appears, that the Apoſtles were far from being Enemies to a free and fair Enquiry. The *Beræans* are commended for taking pains to examine, and the reſult of their impartial Examination was their embracing the Chriſtian Faith. In the ſame Chapter we find St. *Paul* at *Athens* diſputing and reaſoning with the *Athenians* in an excellent manner. At *Corinth* he *reaſoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath, and perſuaded the* Jews *and the* Greeks; and he *continued there a Year and ſix Months, teaching the Word of God among them* †. What needed he have ſtaid ſo long there, if, according to this Gentleman's Repreſentation, the Apoſtles expected to make their Converts with a Word's ſpeaking, and never allowed *Time* for examining or deliberating concerning the Evidences of Chriſtianity? And it was in conſequence of his taking ſo much time in teaching and inſtructing them in the Faith, that he erected that flouriſhing Church of the *Corinthians*. And before this we are told,

* Acts xvii. 10, 11, 12. † Acts xviii. 4, 11.

that *Paul* and *Barnabas abode a long time at* Iconium, *ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, which gave teſtimony unto the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their hands**. At *Epheſus* he *went into the Synagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three Months, diſputing and perſuading the Things concerning the Kingdom of God.* And afterwards, he *diſputed daily in the School of one* Tyrannus; and thus *continued by the ſpace of two Years; ſo that all they which dwelt in* Aſia, *heard the Word of the Lord* Jeſus, *both* Jews *and* Greeks. And how aſſiduous he was all that time in inſtructing them, appears from his Appeal to the Elders of *Epheſus* in his admirable Speech to them. And in conſequence of all this, of ſuch aſſiduous teaching, and reaſoning, accompanied with the moſt glorious miraculous Atteſtations, it is obſerved there were great Numbers brought to the Chriſtian Faith. *So mightily*, ſays the ſacred Hiſtorian, *grew the Word of God, and prevailed*†. That theſe were the Methods made uſe of for ſpreading the Faith of Chriſt, farther appears from the Epiſtles St. *Paul* writ to the Churches he had planted. Thoſe Epiſtles are every where full of Reaſonings, and his manner of addreſſing the Chriſtian Converts on many occaſions, ſufficiently ſhews how far he was from deſiring a blind Faith without Underſtanding: *In Malice be ye Children, but in Underſtanding be ye Men. Be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is. I ſpeak as to wiſe Men, judge ye what I ſay. Prove or try all things, hold*

* Acts xiv. 1, 2. † Acts xix. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20.

hold faſt that which is good *. Is this the Language of a Man that thought believing the Goſpel was inconſiſtent with Examination and Enquiry, and had nothing to do with the Underſtanding? and that Perſons were not to know why they believed, and upon what Grounds? When the Apoſtle *Peter* urges the Believers to whom he writes, to be *ready always to give an Anſwer to every Man that* ſhould *aſk* them a *Reaſon of the Hope that is in them, with Meekneſs and Fear* †, *i. e.* with Modeſty and Gravity; this certainly ſuppoſes, that they themſelves had reaſon for believing, and that they were able to give an Account of it to others too. And whereas this Writer inſinuates, that as the Apoſtles never argued themſelves, ſo they left Inſtructions to their Succeſſors never to diſpute or argue; this is ſo far from being true, that the Apoſtle inſiſts upon it as a proper Qualification of a Teacher of the Goſpel, that he ſhould be *able by ſound Doctrine both to exhort and to convince the Gainſayers* ||. Nor were they to give them up at once to immediate Reprobation, but to reaſon with them with Meekneſs and Temper. *The Servant of the Lord muſt be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient, in Meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves* ‡. The ſame Apoſtle ſpeaking of the falſe Teachers, repreſents them as *underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm*; and as *knowing nothing* **. Where it is plainly intimated, that the Faith of the true Chriſtian Teachers and Apoſtles

* 1 Cor. x. 15. xiv. 20. Eph. v. 17. 1 Theſſ. v. 21.
† 1 Pet. iii. 15. || Tit. i. 9. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.
** 1 Tim. i. 7. vi. 4.

was joined with Underſtanding; they underſtood what they believed and what they taught; and the contrary was the Reproach of the falſe Teachers, whereby they were to be diſtinguiſhed from the true.

And now I think, upon an impartial View of theſe ſeveral Paſſages, to which many others might be added, if it were neceſſary, it appears with the greateſt Evidence, that the Method the Apoſtles made uſe of, as their Lord and Maſter had done before them, to bring Perſons to the Faith of the Goſpel, was by aſſiduous Inſtruction, at the ſame time producing the moſt illuſtrious Credentials of their Divine Miſſion. Neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles ever required Perſons to believe without Evidence ſufficient to make their Aſſent rational. Nor is it true, as this Writer repreſents it, that the firſt Publiſhers of Chriſtianity never *diſputed* or *reaſoned* with thoſe whom they expected to convert to the Faith of Chriſt; on the contrary it appears with the cleareſt Evidence from the Paſſages already produced, that it was their uſual way to reaſon with Men, in order to convert them to the Faith. If they did not diſpute according to the artificial Method of the Schools, yet they always uſed Arguments ſufficient to induce a reaſonable Aſſent; and to convince thoſe whom they required to believe. They reaſoned with the Heathens concerning the Abſurdity of their Idolatry, *Acts* xiv. 15—18. xvii. 22—31. With the *Jews* and Proſelytes of the Gate they reaſoned out of the Holy Scriptures; and both before *Jews* and *Gentiles* they laid the ſtrongeſt Evidence to engage

engage them to believe, ariſing from what Chriſt himſelf had done, his holy Life, his illuſtrious Miracles, and eſpecially his Reſurrection from the Dead, and the extraordinary Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, of which they were Witneſſes. And God confirmed their Teſtimony by the many glorious Miracles they performed in the Name of a riſen *Jeſus*, and by the Gifts of the Spirit with which they were endued. And theſe together formed an Evidence ſtrong and convincing, an Evidence perfectly agreeable to Reaſon, and the common Senſe of Mankind, and which was much quicker in its Operations than a tedious Proceſs of abſtracted Reaſonings could have been. Upon the whole it is manifeſt, that the Apoſtles had no worldly Advantages of any kind to recommend them. It was by force of Evidence, the Purity and Excellency of their Doctrine, the Holineſs of their Lives, their unſhaken Conſtancy and Zeal in profeſſing the Truth, and the many illuſtrious Proofs they gave of their Divine Miſſion, that they prevailed with thoſe who were willing impartially to conſider their Doctrine, and the Proofs whereby it was atteſted. It was by Argument, and the glorious convincing Evidence with which it was accompanied, that Chriſtianity made ſuch an amazing Progreſs; to which the *Jews* at firſt, and the Heathens afterwards, had little to oppoſe beſides bitter Calumnies, Reproaches, and Perſecutions.

And now it may be ſafely left to any Man of common Underſtanding to compare this Account with that given by this Writer, and ſee which of them is moſt agreeable to Truth and Candour, and

to

to the ſacred Records. But tho' this general Anſwer might be ſufficient, it will be proper to enter into a particular Diſcuſſion of the ſeveral Things produced by him to ſhew that our Saviour and his Apoſtles never appealed to the Underſtandings of Men, and that they required them to believe without Reaſon or Evidence. I am apprehenſive this Part of my Remarks will prove tedious to you, as it has been to myſelf. For to be obliged to detect a Succeſſion of groſs Miſrepreſentations, and to conſider a great Variety of Paſſages, which have little Connexion with one another, leads one into a Detail that yields little Entertainment, either to the Writer or to the Reader.

He firſt aſks, "Did our Saviour lay the Arguments and Proofs of his Miſſion frankly before his Diſciples, and then give them time to conſider calmly of their Force, and Liberty to determine thereon as their Reaſon ſhould direct them?" If his Meaning be, that our Saviour, after laying the Proofs of his Miſſion before his Diſciples, ſhould have left them entirely at liberty to receive or reject him as they thought fit; I readily own, that he did not do this. For what could be more abſurd, than firſt to lay before them the evident Proofs that he was ſent from God for the moſt important Purpoſes, and then let them know that they might with equal Innocence receive or reject him? But the Method he took was the wiſeſt and propereſt that could be, and ſuch as left room for Deliberation and thorough Conviction. He gave his Diſciples many Opportunities of converſing with him, and hearing his admirable

rable Diſcourſes, and of obſerving the Holineſs of his Life, the Excellency of his Doctrine, and the many wonderful Works he performed, Works far tranſcending all human Power. And it was not till above a Year after their firſt coming to him, and after they had all the Opportunities that could be deſired of being inſtructed, and fully ſatisfied of his divine Miſſion, that he ſolemnly called the twelve to be his Apoſtles. And it was again a conſiderable time after this, that he ſent them forth to preach in his Name; and the Powers he then gave them of performing the moſt illuſtrious Miracles, muſt needs have been an additional mighty Confirmation of their Faith in him. And after this his Reſurrection from the Dead, of which they were convinced by *many infallible Proofs*, and the farther Inſtructions he then gave them; his Aſcenſion into Heaven, of which they were Eye-Witneſſes; the extraordinary Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and the miraculous Powers and ſpiritual Gifts with which they were endued, according to his own Prediction and Promiſe; all this taken together, rendered the Evidence compleat, and fully convinced them that *Chriſt* was the divine Perſon he profeſſed himſelf to be, and that the Religion he taught was from God. And this Evidence they laid before others, as ſufficient to convince them too.

But our Author farther urges, that *Chriſt* "did "but ill approve the being called on upon any Oc- "caſion to explain himſelf, and therefore his Diſ- "ciples were fearful at every turn of giving of- "fence, and incurring Reproof by any farther "Enquiry,

" Enquiry, even at times when they did not really " apprehend his Meaning *." This is ſo far from being true, that on the contrary, it is manifeſt from the Accounts given by the Evangeliſts, that he encouraged them to aſk him for Information, and ſhewed himſelf well pleaſed when they did ſo. And ſo forward was he to inform them, that he took occaſion to explain Things to them even without their aſking †. The only Paſſage that ſeems to give the leaſt countenance to this Pretence is, that when he *taught his Diſciples, and ſaid, that the Son of Man is to be delivered into the Hands of Men, and they ſhall kill him, and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third Day*; we are told, *they underſtood not that Saying, and were afraid to aſk him* ||. But all that can be gather'd from this is, not that *Chriſt* was unwilling to inform them; for the Inſtructions he then gave them were as plain as Words could be, that he was to ſuffer, and die, and riſe again; or that they were in general afraid to apply to him for explaining himſelf; but that with regard to that particular Subject, the Sufferings of the Meſſiah, they were under the Power of the ſtrongeſt Prejudices; and that it was a thing ſo contrary to their Notions and Expectations, that they were loth to believe and hear of it. And accordingly, St. *Matthew* ſpeaking of the ſame thing, tells us, they were *exceeding ſorry* **. They would all have been willing to explain themſelves, as *Peter* had done on a former occaſion, who underſtood what our Lord had

* P. 37. † Matt. xiii. 18, 36, 37, 51. Mark iv. 34. Mat. xvi. 6—12. John xvi. 18, 19, &c. || Mark ix. 31, 32. Luke ix. 45. ** Matt. xvii. 23.

had ſaid well enough, which was exceeding plain, but could not reconcile it to his own Notions, *Far be it from thee, Lord, this ſhall not be unto thee.* But as they knew the Rebuke that had been given to *Peter*, they were afraid of making any farther Enquiries on a Subject ſo ungrateful to them.

As our Author thinks proper to repreſent our Saviour as unwilling to inform his own Diſciples, when they deſired it, ſo he obſerves, "That he ſighed deeply at the Perverſeneſs of "the *Phariſees* in aſking a *Sign*, i. e. ſome "Teſtimonial of the Truth of his declared Miſ-"ſion, and ſtiled them a fooliſh and perverſe "Generation for their Preſumption; tho' if he "had appealed to their Underſtanding, it had "been ſo far from being criminal, that it had "been their indiſpenſable Duty *." And he is ſo fond of this Inſtance, that he has it over again, *p.* 49. But our Saviour well knew that their demanding a Sign did not proceed from a teachable Diſpoſition, or an honeſt Openneſs to Conviction, (in which caſe he would certainly have encouraged it) but from a petulant cavilling Temper of Mind, which therefore he juſtly reproved. And what ſufficiently ſhew'd this was, that they called for a Sign from him, after he had for a conſiderable time wrought, and was then working a great number of illuſtrious Miracles, of many of which the *Phariſees* themſelves had been Eye-Witneſſes, and had moſt

* P. 38.

perverſely attributed them to the Aſſiſtance of *Beelzebub* the Prince of the Devils: and when after all this they came and aſked of him a Sign, as if he had not wrought any Miracles among them before, juſtly did he ſhew a Reſentment of ſuch Perverſeneſs. But tho' he did not think fit at that time to gratify their peeviſh Demands, or to humour a Temper that is never ſatisfied with preſent Evidence, but is always unreaſonably demanding more; yet after this he ſtill continued in the moſt open manner, and in the view of his Enemies themſelves, to perform the moſt ſtupendous Miracles, and which were really as great as they themſelves could have deſired; and at that very time he referred them to that which was to be the ultimate confirming Evidence of his divine Miſſion, his own Reſurrection from the Dead; which was attended and followed with ſuch Circumſtances, as rendered it in the propereſt ſenſe what the *Phariſees* demanded, *a Sign from Heaven.*

It is with the ſame Candour, that this Gentleman repreſents our Saviour as *rejecting ſome Perſons immediately*, becauſe they did not believe at once, and as *giving them up inſtantly to the Hardneſs of their Hearts without remedy, depriving them judicially even of the moſt common Advantages——He did not many mighty Works there, becauſe of their Unbelief, which rather ſhould have been the reaſon of his multiplying them.* The Inſtance he here refers to, is our Saviour's Conduct towards his own Countrymen

men of *Nazareth*. And on this occaſion he gives out ſome Inſinuations againſt the *long-ſuffering Character* of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, as if it were very *ſevere to reprobate by ſo ſhort a Proceſs for Heſitation, thoſe whom perhaps ſome additional Circumſtance of Power had brought to a proper Temper and Obedience* *. It appears from the whole of *Chriſt*'s Behaviour during the Courſe of his perſonal Miniſtry, how patient and long-ſuffering he was. He went about teaching and preaching the Things of the Kingdom of God, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition and ill Treatment he met with, ſtill repeating his excellent Inſtructions and beneficent Miracles, and with great Tenderneſs bearing with their Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs. How admirably does he expreſs this Temper, in thoſe pathetical Words, *Oh Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,——how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her Wings, but ye would not!* † We may be ſure therefore, that his Conduct towards the People of *Nazareth* was not owing to any want of *Long-ſuffering*; and that if a *tardy Genius* and *innocent Scruples*, as this Writer phraſes it, had been the only Impediments, our Lord would have continued to indulge a *patient Attendance*. But it muſt be conſidered, that the firſt time he went to preach among them, which was after his Fame had ſpread throughout all *Galilee*, they attempted to murder him ‖. Notwithſtanding which, he

* P. 66, 67. † Luke xiii. 34. ‖ Luke iv. 14, 16, 29.

went again a conſiderable time after, when the Fame of his great Wiſdom and Miracles was ſtill better eſtabliſhed, and he did then perform ſome mighty Works among them. But inſtead of being duly affected with his excellent Diſcourſes and with his Miracles, they only reflected on the Meanneſs of his Parentage and worldly Circumſtances *. And therefore his not performing many mighty Works among them was owing to the juſt Knowledge he had of their irreclaimable Obſtinacy, which both might be gathered from their Conduct, and which he was well aſſured of, as he had the power of diſcerning the Spirits of Men. For, as the Evangeliſt obſerves, *he needed not that any ſhould teſtify of Man: for he knew what was in Man* †.

If *Chriſt* ordered his Diſciples to *ſhake off the Duſt of their Feet, as a Teſtimony* againſt a City that would not *receive* them, or *hearken to* them (which is another thing our Author refers to ‖,) it was not his intention they ſhould do it, till after having tried all proper Methods, and till it appeared they were plainly incorrigible. So the Apoſtles underſtood and practiſed his Directions. *Paul* and *Barnabas ſhook off the Duſt of their Feet* againſt the *Jews* at *Antioch* in *Piſidia*; but it was not till after they not only *contradicted* and *blaſphemed*, but *ſtirred up the chief Men of the City, and raiſed Perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas, *and expelled them out of their Coaſts* **.

Another

* Matt. xiii 54—58. Mark vi. 2, 3. † Joh. ii. 25. ‖ P. 39.
** Acts xiii. 45, 50, 51.

Another Inſtance we have with regard to the *Jews* at *Corinth*: *Paul ſhook his Raiment, and ſaid unto them, your Blood be upon your own Heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the* Gentiles. But this was not, till after he had for a conſiderable time together *reaſoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath*; and they not only *oppoſed themſelves*, but *blaſphemed*, i. e. manifeſted ſuch a malicious and ſpiteful Oppoſition, breaking forth into Reproaches and Blaſphemies againſt the Name of *Jeſus*, that it plainly appeared, it was in vain to ſtrive with them any longer. He therefore choſe that way of teſtifying that he had diſcharged his Duty, and that the Guilt would be chargeable only upon themſelves *.

But what this Gentleman ſeems to lay the principal ſtreſs upon is, that our Saviour required Perſons to believe in an Inſtant, before any Evidence given. To this purpoſe he obſerves, that it was his Language before he wrought his Miracles, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* "The Conviction was to precede the Evidence, "as the Terms of the Favour to be conſequent-"ly conferred †." The Caſe where our Lord uſed theſe Expreſſions, is that of the two blind Men that came to him, ſaying, *Thou Son of* David (a Character by which the Meſſiah was then uſually diſtinguiſhed) *have mercy upon us.* This Confeſſion they made voluntarily without his requiring it, and it was undoubtedly founded upon

* Acts xviii. 4, 5, 6. † P. 37, 49, 50.

upon what they had heard of his illuſtrious Miracles and wiſe Diſcourſes, the Fame of which had ſpread abroad through all *Judea* and *Galilee*. It was therefore with great Propriety that our Saviour put that Queſtion to them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* And upon their declaring they did, *touched their Eyes and ſaid, According to your Faith be it unto you* *. This was not a requiring thoſe to believe who did not believe before, and that in an Inſtant and without Evidence, as this Writer is pleaſed to repreſent it; but it was an approving the Faith they already had, and a giving farther Evidence to confirm and eſtabliſh it. And in general, it holds true with regard to every Caſe recorded in the Goſpel, in which *Chriſt* required thoſe that came to him to be healed, to declare their Belief in him, that they were Perſons that had ſome Faith in him before. And the Deſign of his requiring them to believe was in effect no more than this, to engage them to make a Profeſſion of their Faith before others, or to encourage them to perſiſt in believing, when he ſaw their Faith began to ſtagger thro' extraordinary Difficulties and Trials; as in the caſe of *Jairus*, and the Father of the young Man whom the Diſciples could not relieve †. And then upon their declaring they believed, he wrought his Miracles upon them, the more ſignificantly to ſhew, what this Gentleman thinks fit to deny, that his Miracles were deſigned and wrought as Proofs of

* Matt. ix. 27, 28, 29. † Mark v. 36. ix. 23, 24.

of his divine Miſſion. And this alſo is the deſign of thoſe Expreſſions he ſometimes makes uſe of, after he had wrought the miraculous Cure; *Thy Faith hath ſaved thee*; *thy Faith hath made thee whole.* He hereby ſignified his Approbation of the Faith they had ſhewn, and directed their Views to that which was the main Deſign of his Miracles, *viz.* to confirm their Faith in him, and bear teſtimony to his Miſſion. And yet it is far from being true, what this Gentleman expreſſly affirms, that our Saviour *conſtantly ſtipulated for no ordinary degree of Perſuaſion beforehand*; from whence he infers, that they *owed the whole Efficacy of their Cure to their Faith.* For nothing is more certain than that with regard to the far greater part of the Miracles he wrought he did not ſtipulate for Faith beforehand. Inſtances of which ſee referred to in the Margin, to which many more might eaſily be added *. This ſhews how little credit is due to a Writer that is capable of endeavouring to impoſe ſo palpable a Falſhood upon his Reader, even when he pretends to give an exact and faithful Narrative of our Saviour's Proceedings.

The Inſtance he mentions, p. 65. of our Saviour's Command to *Matthew* to *follow* him, is not an Inſtance of a Command to a Man that did not believe before, to believe in an Inſtant, and without Evidence; but of a Command to a Man

* John v. 12, 13, 14. John ix. 6, 7, 11. Matt. xii. 13. Luke vii. 13, 14. xiv. 2, 4. xxii. 5.

Man that already believed, to follow him as one of his immediate Diſciples and Attendants. Nor is it true, that *Matthew precipitately deſerted a beneficial Employment for he knew not whom.* For he well knew who *Jeſus* was, as he lived at *Capernaum*, where Chriſt chiefly had his Reſidence, and performed many of his mighty Works, and delivered many of his excellent Diſcourſes. Our Author ſeems aware of this, and therefore urges, "That it is likely, if "what he had ſeen before had diſpoſed him to "Diſcipleſhip, he would have had the Merit "of engaging voluntarily in the Service, with-"out waiting for a particular Addreſs." But this does not follow. Suppoſing him ever ſo well diſpoſed, he might queſtion, whether, as he was a Publican, Chriſt would take him among the number of thoſe Diſciples that were conſtantly to attend him, conſidering the common Prejudices againſt Perſons of that Character. But when he heard Chriſt himſelf particularly calling him to follow him, he gladly accepted the Invitation, and preferred the being his conſtant Attendant to his gainful Employment. There is nothing in all this but what may reaſonably be accounted for.

As to the Inſtance of the *Samaritans, who it ſeems had never heard of Chriſt before, and yet believed on him readily for the Saying* of the Woman: *A notable Foundation truly for Confidence and Conviction, and perhaps for Martyrdom!*

tyrdom! * In this caſe, there is no Command of our Saviour enjoining the *Samaritans* to believe. The Fact only is related, that they did believe. Nor is this their believing to be underſtood of a complete and perfect Faith, as our Author is pleas'd to repreſent it in this, and all the other Caſes he mentions. It is evident to any one that is acquainted with the Language of the New Teſtament, that Believing is there frequently to be underſtood of a Faith but juſt begun, and which was as yet very imperfect, and far from being well eſtabliſhed †. So it is to be underſtood, when it is ſaid of ſome of the *Samaritans*, that they *believed on him for the Saying of the Woman.* The Account ſhe gave them of his having diſcovered to her the moſt ſecret Tranſactions of her Life, as well as of his wiſe and excellent Diſcourſe, inclined them to believe in him. This was the firſt occaſion, or beginning of their believing. But their Faith was afterwards mightily confirmed, and received great Acceſſions from their perſonal Converſation with him, and the admirable Inſtructions he gave them in a manner far exceeding whatever they had heard before. This added to the Proof he had given of a wonderful and ſupernatural Knowledge, led them to conclude, that he was the Chriſt, whom they, as well as the *Jews*, were then in ſtrong Expectation of. And they ſeem to have had juſter Notions of the

* P. 66. † John ii. 23, 24. vi. 66. vii. 31. Acts viii 13.

Deſign of the Meſſiah's coming than the *Jews* themſelves, and not to have been ſo intoxicated with the Notions of his temporal Glory and Grandeur, as appears from their calling him the *Saviour of the World*; and from the Declaration made by the Woman, *I know that Meſſiah cometh, when he is come, he will tell us all Things.*

But if our Saviour had not required Men to believe inſtantly, and without giving them time for Deliberation, would he have called his Diſciples *Fools, and ſlow of heart to believe! becauſe a Narrative of four Hours had not wrought a thorough Conviction* *? The Paſſage here referred to is in *Luke* xxiv. 25. with regard to which it muſt be conſidered, that the Perſons our Saviour here reproves were of the number of thoſe Diſciples that conſtantly attended him. And what he reproves them for, was their not underſtanding that Chriſt *ought to ſuffer* before he *entred into his Glory*. This was not the firſt time he had propoſed theſe ſacred Truths to them; he had done it at ſeveral times before in the plaineſt manner †. He had juſt reaſon therefore to reproach them for their *Fooliſhneſs* or *Inconſideration*, for that is the proper Signification of the Word there uſed, and their *Slowneſs*; which was not owing to a natural Defect in their Underſtanding, but to their culpable Prejudices, and to a Neglect of improving the Inſtructions that had been given them.

* P. 66. † Matt. xvi. 21. xvii. 22, 23. xx. 17, 18, 19.

them. And now again after his Reſurrection he took pains to *open* to them *the Scriptures*, and make them *underſtand* them, ver. 27, 32. which would have been needleſs, if, as this Gentleman inſinuates, Believing had nothing to do with the Underſtanding.

Our Author mentions ſome other Inſtances of ſudden Converſions, which relate not directly to the time of our Saviour, but of his Apoſtles, to ſhew that they alſo required Men to believe in an inſtant, without any *Conceſſions of Time for Deliberation.* Thus he obſerves, that the "Eunuch was the Proſelyte of a ſhort Stage, "inſtructed in one Hour, and baptized the "next." p. 39. But ſuppoſing what is very probable, that the Eunuch had heard a great deal at *Jeruſalem*, from whence he was then returning, concerning *Jeſus*, and the Miracles wrought by him; and after his Death by his Diſciples, who teſtified that he was riſen from the dead, and confirmed their Teſtimony by the moſt illuſtrious Atteſtations, he might be well prepared for Inſtruction. And when things were more diſtinctly explained to him by *Philip*, and the Eunuch's Prejudices were removed, by convincing him from that Prophecy in *Iſaiah*, that the Meſſiah was to undergo many and grievous Sufferings; the Suddenneſs of his Converſion is very conſiſtent with his having a rational Conviction of the Truth of our Saviour's Miſſion. It was to his Underſtanding that *Philip* addreſs'd himſelf, *Underſtandeſt thou*

what thou readeſt? Nor did he, after inſtructing him, require him to believe without delay; but the Eunuch himſelf made the Propoſal to be baptized, and voluntarily declared his Belief, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was *the Son of God.*

But perhaps it is more to the Author's purpoſe, what he obſerves, that "whole Congre-"gations were often gained over at a hearing, "and Thouſands at a time actually convinced "by a ſingle Lecture." I ſuppoſe, he particularly refers to the three thouſand that were converted at St. *Peter*'s firſt Sermon on the Day of Pentecoſt. And it muſt be acknowledg'd, that this is very remarkable; but no Proof that their Faith was not reaſonable, or without ſufficient convincing Evidence. Let us take the caſe as it really was in all its Circumſtances. It was well known to the *Jews* that *Jeſus* had performed among them for ſome Years together the moſt aſtoniſhing Miracles; for the Truth of which St. *Peter* here appeals to themſelves, as Facts that could not be conteſted. They knew his holy Life, and had heard his wiſe and excellent Diſcourſes, and a conſiderable number of them had from time to time been brought to believe *, tho' their Faith was far from being well eſtabliſhed. And after he had been ſeized and condemned by the Authority of their great Council, many of them were prevailed upon by the chief Prieſts, Rulers, and Phariſees, to conſent

* See to this purpoſe John ii. 23. vii. 31, 40, 41. x. 41, 42. xi. 45. Luke vii. 16. Matt. xxi. 46.

ſent to his being crucified, which St. *Peter* therefore charges home upon them as their Guilt. They had afterwards been Witneſſes to the preternatural Darkneſs, the Earthquake, and other extraordinary things that happened at his Crucifixion, and which made a mighty Impreſſion on many of the People *. They knew that his Diſciples teſtified that he was riſen again from the dead, and they themſelves were now Witneſſes of the wonderful Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon his Diſciples, and were convinced, by what they heard and ſaw, of the Truth and Reality of it, and that it was a thing which far exceeded all human Power, and carried in it the ſtrongeſt Evidences of a divine Interpoſition. This ſatisfied them, that the Teſtimony the Apoſtles gave of Chriſt's Reſurrection and Exaltation was true, and that therefore he was the promiſed Saviour; eſpecially as the Apoſtle *Peter* ſhewed that all this was perfectly agreeable to the Predictions of the Prophets concerning him. In ſuch an extraordinary Concurrence of Circumſtances the Conviction wrought upon them was ſpeedy, but very reaſonable, and founded upon ſufficient Evidence. The ſame Obſervation may be made with regard to the Numbers that were converted afterwards on occaſion of another Diſcourſe of St. *Peter*. They had juſt ſeen a moſt aſtoniſhing Miracle performed by *Peter* and *John* in reſtoring a Man whom they all knew to have been lame from his Mother's Womb,

* Luke xxiii. 47, 48.

Womb, by only bidding him in the Name of *Jeſus* riſe up and walk: No wonder that this, together with the Apoſtle's excellent Diſcourſe, added to what had ſo lately happened at the day of Pentecoſt, which was then freſh in memory, and to what they obſerv'd concerning the exemplary Lives, the Piety and Charity of the firſt Believers, brought over to the Faith many that probably were very favourably diſpoſed before; but were now, by this additional Evidence, fully convinced. Beſides all which, we may well ſuppoſe there was an extraordinary Preſence and Influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Minds of Men, communicated for the more ſpeedy and effectual ſpreading of the Goſpel at its firſt Publication; and which was a farther illuſtrious Proof of its divine Original, and of the Approbation of Heaven. Upon the whole, all that can be juſtly concluded from the numerous and ſudden Converſions at the firſt Publication of the Goſpel, is not that Chriſtianity is not founded on Argument, or that the firſt Believers had no Reaſon or Evidence for their believing; but that the Evidence was ſo ſtrong and convincing, and came upon them with ſuch an over-powering Light and Force, as made a much quicker Progreſs than mere abſtracted ſubtil Reaſonings would have done. For it proceeded upon Facts of the moſt extraordinary nature, obvious and convincing, even to the meaneſt Capacities; and from whence the Inference was eaſy and natural, that *Jeſus* and the Apoſtles

Apostles were sent from God, and that God bare witness to their Doctrine. But then it must be considered, that tho' the Gospel continued to make a wonderful Progress throughout the World by the force of the Evidence with which it was accompanied, yet it was principally at first, and in *Jerusalem*, that we read of such numbers converted in so short a time to the Christian Faith. For there were many Circumstances there concurring to it, which did not meet to such advantage in other places. It had been the Scene of Christ's Miracles, Sufferings, Resurrection, and the extraordinary Effusion of the Holy Ghost; and there were many there that had been Witnesses to what Christ had said and done, and who had been in his Life-time well-disposed to believe in him, tho' afterwards scandalized by his Sufferings; and therefore were the more easily wrought upon by the manifest Demonstrations of his Divine Power and Glory after his Ascension. And certainly the Evidence must have been very strong, which could engage such numbers in *Jerusalem* itself to acknowledge him for the Messiah, who had been but a little before so ignominiously crucified there, after having been condemned as an Impostor by the chief Men of their Nation, and by their great Sanhedrim, for whose Decisions they had all had the profoundest Veneration.

I have now considered the account this Gentleman is pleas'd to give us of the *Proceedings* of

of our bleſſed Lord and his Apoſtles in *planting the Goſpel*, and from which he pretends to prove, that there was *no Appeal to the Underſtanding ever made or intended*; and that they commanded Men to believe at once, without offering any Reaſon or Evidence to ingage them to believe. He himſelf is ſenſible, that there is one obvious Objection lies againſt his Account, and that is, that the Miracles wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles were deſigned as Evidence to ingage Men to believe; and to take away the force of this he endeavours to ſhew,

That it was not the Meaning or Intention of Chriſt himſelf to prove his own divine Miſſion by his Miracles; and that they were in themſelves no way fitted to be ſuch Proofs and Evidences.

As to the firſt of theſe, it is certainly a very extraordinary Attempt to undertake to ſhew from the Goſpel-Hiſtory, that Chriſt had no Intention to prove his divine Miſſion by his Miracles, when he himſelf in the moſt expreſs terms imaginable declares, that this was one principal Intention of them, and refers both the Jews and his own Diſciples to thoſe Miracles, as the ſtrongeſt Atteſtations to the Divinity of his Miſſion, ſufficient to convince them that he came from God, and to render them inexcuſable if they did not believe in him; concerning which ſee above, *p.* 7.

Part of what our Author here urges, is what he had ſaid before, and which has been already

conſidered,

conſidered, concerning our Saviour's reproving the Phariſees for aſking a Sign, and concerning his previouſly requiring Faith from thoſe upon whom he wrought his Miracles.

Other things that he offers here are ſo weak, that it would be honouring them too far to enter into a laborious Confutation of them. Thus he argues, that our Saviour did not intend his Miracles as Proofs of his divine Miſſion, becauſe he did not gratify *Herod* in working a Miracle before him at the time of his Paſſion; as if a Man of *Herod*'s Character were diſpoſed in thoſe Circumſtances to become his Diſciple, though not long before, upon being aſſured of the Miracles Chriſt wrought in *Galilee*, he deſigned to have murdered him *. He argues the ſame thing from our Saviour's refuſing to ſuffer the evil Spirits whom he ejected to bear witneſs to him as the Chriſt; and if he had readily accepted their Teſtimony, his Adverſaries would probably have improved it to give countenance to that blaſphemous Calumny they had raiſed againſt him, that he was in confederacy with thoſe evil Spirits.

It would be ſomething more to his purpoſe, if it were true, that Chriſt *was remarkably upon the Reſerve, whenever he happened to be among unbelieving Company, and that he was particularly ſparing of thoſe ſuppoſed Arguments*, viz. his Miracles, *amongſt the very Perſons who ſeemed moſt to want them.* I know no inſtance

* See Luke xi. 7. xiii. 31, 32.

in the Goſpel-Hiſtory that gives the leaſt Countenance to this Surmize, but our Saviour's Conduct towards the Men of *Nazareth*, which has been already accounted for. But if he would inſinuate, that our Lord never wrought his Miracles before Unbelievers, nothing can be more falſe. It may be ſaid of his Miracles in general, that they were wrought in the ſight of Perſons who at firſt did not believe in him, but many of whom were brought to believe by thoſe Miracles *. The Scribes and Phariſees were his bittereſt Enemies, and theſe were often preſent when he performed his mighty Works, nor did he decline working his Miracles before them, even when he knew they had a Deſign to obſerve and intrap him. Inſtances of which ſee *Matt.* xii. 10, 14. *Mark* xi. 5—12. ix. 14—27. We are expreſsly told, ſpeaking of the unbelieving Jews, that Jeſus *did many Miracles* before them; *John* xii. 37. And he himſelf frequently in his Diſcourſes with his Enemies appeals to his wonderful Works, as things which they all knew and could not poſſibly deny, and inſiſts upon them as uncontеſted Proofs of his divine Miſſion.

Our Author further argues from Chriſt's enjoining thoſe on whom he wrought his Miracles not to divulge them. *See thou tell no Man* (ſays he) *was generally the Charge.* But this alſo is very unfairly repreſented. With regard to the far greater part of his Miracles, no ſuch Injunction

* See particularly John ii. 18, 23, 24. iii. 2.

tion was given. It was only on ſome particular Occaſions, for which no doubt there were ſpecial Reaſons. It is eaſy to enumerate all the Inſtances of this kind recorded in the Evangeliſts. Such was the Caſe of the Leper mentioned *Matt.* viii. 2, 4. The two blind Men that addreſs'd to him as *the Son of David*, i. e. the Meſſiah, *Matt.* ix. 27—30. The dumb and deaf Man, *Mark* vii. 36. And the Caſe of *Jairus*'s Daughter, who was raiſed from the dead. In theſe Caſes all the Evangeliſts that relate the Miracles obſerve, that Chriſt forbad the Perſons to divulge them. And there is another Inſtance of this kind, *Matt.* xii. 16. where, after Chriſt had reſtored the Man that had the withered Hand in the ſight of the Phariſees, we are told, he *withdrew himſelf from thence*, and *healed thoſe* that came to him, and *charged them that they ſhould not make him known.* With regard to the Caſe laſt mentioned, the Reaſon of the Injunction is plain; it was becauſe the Phariſees were at that time *taking counſel with the Herodians* how they might *deſtroy him*, as appears from Ver. 14. As to the Caſe of the Leper whom he had cleanſed, it is to be obſerved, that the divulging of the Miracle brought ſuch Multitudes together, that *Jeſus could no more openly enter into the City, but was without in deſart Places* for a while. And it was probably becauſe our Saviour foreſaw this Inconvenience, that he forbad him to publiſh it abroad. To which it may be added, that as the People

had on ſome Occaſions ſhewn a forwardneſs to make him a King, he ſometimes found it neceſſary to withdraw, that he might give no occaſion to Tumult or Sedition; and when he knew any particular Miracle he wrought was likely to have that Effect, he forbad it to be divulged. And this alſo probably might be one Reaſon why he charged his Diſciples not to make known his Transfiguration, and ſometimes forbad them to publiſh that he was the Chriſt, the full Notification of which was reſerved till after his Sufferings and Reſurrection, when there was no longer any Danger of it's producing that Effect. But though we could not at this Diſtance aſſign the preciſe Reaſons why our Lord at ſome particular times enjoined them not to divulge what he had done; yet this we are ſure of, that the Reaſon could not be that he did not intend his Miracles as Proofs of his divine Miſſion, ſince he frequently in the moſt ſolemn manner appealed to them as Proofs.

But what this Writer ſeems to lay a particular Streſs upon, is that which our Saviour ſaid, when applied to for his extraordinary Aſſiſtance in favour of the Nobleman's Child, *Unleſs you ſee Signs and Wonders, you will not believe.* But what is this deſigned to prove? Is it to prove, that Chriſt in working his Miracles had no Intention that his Miracles ſhould be regarded as Proofs of his divine Miſſion? This indeed is what this Gentleman produces it for; but the

contrary

contrary rather follows from it. For if he knew the Jews would not believe without Miracles, and if it was his Deſire and Deſign that they ſhould believe in him, which will ſcarce be denied, this made it neceſſary for him to work Miracles before them with this very View, that they might be thereby brought to believe in him. But it will be ſaid, that our Saviour here reproves the Jews for not believing in him without Miracles. But neither could this be his Intention; ſince he himſelf declares, that if he had not done *Works among them which no other Man did, they had not had Sin.* But what he deſigns here to reprove is the Temper of thoſe, who though they had ſufficient Evidence of his Miracles from Teſtimony that might be ſafely depended on, yet would not believe in him, except they themſelves ſaw them with their own Eyes. This ſeems to have been the Caſe of this Nobleman. We are told *John* iv. 45. that the *Galileans* who had been at the Feaſt at *Jeruſalem* and had *ſeen* the Miracles Chriſt had done there, *received* him upon his Return into *Galilee.* This Nobleman had not been there, but had been informed of all this; and when he heard that *Jeſus was come into Galilee, he went and beſought him that he would come down and heal his Son.* He was in hope that Chriſt might heal his Son, if he *came down* and touched him, but not otherwiſe. His Faith ſeems to have been very imperfect, probably becauſe he himſelf

himſelf had not ſeen any of the mighty Works Chriſt had wrought, though he had ſufficient Reaſon to be aſſured of the Truth of them. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, *Except ye ſee Signs and Wonders, ye will not believe.* And he did not go down to his Houſe, as he deſired, to heal his Son, but ſaid, *Go thy way, thy Son liveth.* The Nobleman ſeems to have been ſenſible of the Reproof, and *he believed the Word that Jeſus had ſpoken, and went his way.* And upon finding that his Son began to recover *the very Hour that Jeſus ſaid unto him, thy Son liveth, he himſelf believed, with his whole Houſe.* He then fully believed Chriſt's divine Miſſion, of which he had doubted before.

As this Gentleman does what he can to make it appear, that Chriſt himſelf never intended his Miracles as Proofs of his divine Miſſion, ſo he endeavours to ſhew, that in themſelves they are no way fitted to be ſuch Proofs or Evidences.

And firſt, he thinks he may "not unplauſibly "ſuggeſt, what has been ſo often urged upon "this occaſion, that Miracles have, time out of "mind, been undoubtedly performed, as well "in favour of falſe Doctrines, and therefore they "can never be ſingly, and of themſelves alone, "any certain Marks of a true, *p.* 46." He ſpeaks of it here as paſt all doubt, that Miracles have been done in favour of falſe Doctrines, tho' very probably he believes nothing of the matter. For he ſcruples not to call the Popiſh Miracles, which he afterwards mentions, *falſe*

and

and fictitious, tho' theſe are as much to be depended on as other Miracles pretended to be wrought in favour of falſe Doctrines. But if he would offer any thing to the purpoſe, in order to run a Parallel between the Atteſtations pretended to be given to any falſe Doctrines, and thoſe given to the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, let him ſhew,

1. That the Miracles wrought or pretended to be wrought in favour of falſe Doctrines, or of Impoſtors, were Works plainly above all the Power or Art of Man to perform. For many wonderful things may be done by human Art or Skill, and a dextrous Application of natural Cauſes, which cannot properly be called Miracles.

2. That theſe things were done, not in a ſingle Inſtance, or in a very few Inſtances, in which caſe there might be ſome Suſpicion of Management; but that there was a Succeſſion of them in many Inſtances, and for a Courſe of Years together.

3. That theſe Miracles were wrought in profeſſed Atteſtation to the Divine Miſſion of the Perſons by whom, or in favour of whom they were wrought, and to the Truth of the Doctrines they delivered. For ſtrange things have happened from time to time in all Ages and Countries, from which no Conſequence can be drawn, as not being wrought in declared Atteſtation to any Doctrines, or to the Divine Miſſion of any Perſons.

4. That they were wrought not in ſecret or before a few only, but in an open publick manner; wrought not merely in favour of the reigning Religion, when a very nice Examination would not be very ſafe; but in favour of a Religion contrary to the moſt inveterate Prejudices, and in the view of ſubtil and malicious Enemies, who had the Power in their hands, and who had all the Opportunities that could be deſired to have detected the Impoſture, if there had been any; and were ſtrongly carried by their Inclinations and Intereſts to do it. And yet were not able upon the moſt diligent Examination to detect Fraud or Impoſture in any one Inſtance, in which caſe it might have induced a Suſpicion of the reſt, that they were all owing to the ſame Cauſes.

5. That the Accounts of theſe Miracles were delivered by Perſons, who themſelves ſaw and knew him, and who by their whole Conduct gave all the Marks of diſintereſted Probity and Sincerity, and perſiſted in their Teſtimony with an unſhaken Conſtancy, without ever falſifying in any one Inſtance, tho' they thereby expoſed themſelves to the moſt grievous Perſecutions and Sufferings.

6. That even ſome of the moſt obſtinate Adverſaries that lived neareſt thoſe Times did not pretend abſolutely to deny the Facts, tho' they endeavoured to attribute them to wrong Cauſes; and that great Numbers of Perſons ſtrongly prejudiced againſt the Religion thus

atteſted,

atteſted, embraced it upon the Credit of thoſe miraculous Atteſtations, in oppoſition to their former Prejudices, and to their worldly Intereſts, as well as to their favourite Appetites and Paſſions; and this in the very Age in which the Facts were done, and in Places where they had the beſt Opportunities of enquiring into the Truth of thoſe Facts, and detecting them if they had been falſe *.

* The *Jewiſh* Story concerning *Jeſus*'s performing his wonderful Works by virtue of the ineffable Name which he ſtole out of the Temple and hid in his Thigh, is well known. And many both of the *Jews* and *Heathens* aſcribed his Miracles to his extraordinary Skill in Magick: And among others, *Celſus*, as appears in ſeveral Paſſages of *Origen*'s Work againſt him. All that can be truly gathered from hence is, That the Truth of the miraculous Facts was ſo evident, that they were not able to deny it. For as to the Charge itſelf, it is manifeſtly abſurd and ridiculous, whether we conſider the Nature and Circumſtances of the Works themſelves, or the End for which they were wrought, or the Character of *Jeſus*, and the Nature and Deſign of the Religion he publiſhed to the World.——PLINY obſerves, that never was any Man fonder of *Magick* than NERO, or did more to encourage and countenance it, and that he ſent for the ableſt Maſters of it from all Parts, and yet that never was the Vanity and Falſhood of it more plainly diſcovered than in his Time. *Plin. Hiſt. Nat. Lib.* 30. *Cap.* 2.—— And if the *Favour* and *Encouragement* given to it by a mighty *Emperor* could not hinder the Fallacy of it from being detected; can it be imagin'd, that if the Things done by our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles*, who had no Authority to countenance them, and ſo many watchful Enemies to obſerve them, had been of no higher kind than *Magical* Operations, the Folly and Impoſture would not have been ſoon detected and expoſed?

If this Writer will pleaſe to produce any falſe Religion that had ſuch Teſtimonials, and to whom all this may be applied, it ſhall be conſidered. In the mean time I affirm, that it is abſolutely out of his power; and that therefore this Part of the Evidence for Chriſtianity ſtands upon a firm and immoveable Baſis; ſince it may be clearly ſhewn, that all the above-mentioned Circumſtances concur in it, in which it can never be equal'd by any falſe Religion. And tho' the Scripture warns us (as he obſerves) of *lying Wonders and falſe Chriſts, and to take the utmoſt care of what we give credit to of this kind*; yet it certainly never ſuppoſes, that any falſe Chriſts ſhould ariſe, who ſhould be able to work ſuch a Succeſſion of glorious Miracles, as were wrought in atteſtation of Chriſtianity.

The wonderful Works wrought by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in avowed Confirmation of his divine Miſſion were of ſuch a nature, and ſo manifeſtly tranſcending all the Art and Power of Man, ſuch as the reſtoring periſhed Limbs in a Moment, healing the moſt deſperate Diſeaſes by a Word, commanding the Winds and the Seas, and even raiſing the Dead; that they might be alone ſufficient, as they were circumſtanced, to give a convincing Proof of his divine Miſſion: but they received a wonderful Confirmation by his Reſurrection from the Dead, which he himſelf had foretold, and to which he appealed, and of which there was all the Evidence that could

be reaſonably deſired *. And this was followed and farther confirmed by his Aſcenſion into Heaven in the view of his gazing Diſciples; and both were placed beyond all reaſonable doubt, and received a mighty additional Force, by the extraordinary Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt ſoon after

* Our Author gives a hint, that if our Saviour had but *taken one Turn in the Market-place* after his Reſurrection, this would have been a more effectual Conviction to the *Jews* than all the Evidence that was offered, and *might have ſpared both the painful Lives and Labour of ſo many holy Vouchers, who periſhed merely by the thing's being done in a Corner*, p. 67. But certainly the Proof already given of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection was a much ſtronger Evidence of it, than merely his taking a Turn or two thro' the Market-Place would have been, before a Croud of People, few of whom could be ſuppoſed to be ſo intimately acquainted with him as to be abſolutely ſure that it was he: or if they had believed that it was like him, they would have been ready to think, as the Diſciples at firſt did, that they *had ſeen a Spirit*, or ſome unaccountable Appearance in his Form and Shape. Whereas, as the Caſe is now circumſtanced, he *ſhewed himſelf alive* after his Reſurrection *by many infallible Proofs*, to Perſons to whom he was perfectly known, and who could not be impoſed upon in this matter. They themſelves were not forward to believe it, till they could no longer doubt of it without renouncing the Teſtimony of all their Senſes. They ſaw him, they handled him, they eat and drank with him, they converſed familiarly with him on many important Subjects for forty Days together. If it had only been the eleven Apoſtles that teſtified this, the Number of the Witneſſes would have been very ſufficient; but there were many others that ſaw him, and converſed with him. And at laſt he *was ſeen*, as St. *Paul* in his firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* affirms, by *above five hundred at once*, moſt of whom *were alive* when he writ that Epiſtle. It can-

after his Aſcenſion, in conſequence of his own Prediction and Promiſe. And this again was proved to the World by the moſt extraordinary Gifts and Powers abiding with his Diſciples, who went thro' all Nations teaching the things which he had commanded them, and were enabled

not without the greateſt Abſurdity be ſuppoſed, that there ſhould have been a Combination among ſo many Perſons to put an Impoſture upon the World in that matter; or if there had, it is ſcarce poſſible but that it muſt have been detected, and that among ſuch a Number one or other would have been prevail'd upon by Bribes or Threatnings, to diſcover and acknowledge the Impoſture. Whereas they all perſiſted uniformly in their Teſtimony with an unſhaken Conſtancy, and many of them ſealed it with their Blood. But that which gave the moſt remarkable Confirmation to their Teſtimony, and which was never equal'd in any other Caſe, was, that God bore them witneſs by Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, poured forth upon the Diſciples in the Name of a riſen *Jeſus*.

The Story ſet about by the *Jews*, that his Diſciples ſtole him by Night whilſt the Soldiers ſlept, was a plain Acknowledgment that his Body was gone out of the Sepulchre; and ſince it was pretended the Soldiers were aſleep, he might have riſen of himſelf for any thing they could tell to the contrary. But if they had really believed that the Diſciples ſtole him, whilſt a Guard of Soldiers were purpoſely ſet to watch the Body; can it be imagined that they would not have made a ſtrict Enquiry, and have got the Soldiers ſeverely puniſhed for ſo criminal a Neglect of their Duty, which could ſcarce be ſuppoſed without a Combination between them and the Diſciples? Why did they not take pains to ſearch out and ſeize the Diſciples, to confront them with one another, and with the Guards? Why did they not call *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* to an account, to get, if poſſible, to the bottom of the Impoſture, and to ſtifle all Reports of his

enabled for many Years together in the Name and by the Power of a riſen *Jeſus*, to perform the moſt illuſtrious Miracles, ſuch as he himſelf had done whilſt on Earth; all which came in aid

his Reſurrection in the very birth? This is the Method that common Senſe would have directed to in this caſe; and which they would undoubtedly have taken, conſidering how zealous they were in the Cauſe, and that they had the power in their hands. But inſtead of this, all was huddled up; the Centinels were unpuniſhed, their Evidence ſtifled, no farther Enquiry made. And when the Diſciples openly avowed that *Chriſt* was riſen from the Dead, of which they were Witneſſes, they durſt not enter into a particular Diſcuſſion or Examination of that matter, but contented themſelves with commanding them not to ſpeak in his Name, who boldly declared to their faces, that they would do it. In a word, it is plain from their whole Management on this occaſion, that it was not for want of ſufficient Evidence of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, that the Rulers of the *Jews* did not believe in him; and that as they were diſpoſed, they would not have acknowledged him as the Meſſiah, whatever other Evidence had been offered; ſo when they could not deny that *Jeſus* had raiſed *Lazarus* from the Dead, inſtead of being convinced by it, they only took counſel how they might deſtroy them both.

But if the Rulers and Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation had believed in a riſen *Jeſus*, and embraced his Religion, would thoſe, who now make their not believing an Argument againſt the Truth of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, have been convinced? No. It is probable they would have taken ſtill greater advantage of this, and repreſented it as a national Affair, in which the *Jews* joined out of that Attachment to the Honour and Intereſt of their Nation, for which they were ſo remarkable. Such is the true Spirit of Infidelity, always to find fault with the Evidence that is already offered, and to inſiſt upon ſome other or farther Proof, which if it were granted would be as far from giving ſatisfaction as before.

aid of their Teſtimony, and gave it a force which no other Teſtimony ever had. Here is ſuch a Concurrence of the moſt extraordinary divine Atteſtations, ſuch a Concatenation of Evidences, one ſupporting another, that the Apoſtle had reaſon to ſay to the Chriſtian Converts, that if *an Angel from Heaven* had endeavoured to turn them to *another Goſpel*, they were not to regard him. Where he does not put a Caſe that he ſuppoſed might really happen, but uſes a ſtrong Manner of Expreſſion to ſignify, that no Pretence whatſoever ſhould turn them from a ſteady Adherence to the Goſpel of *Chriſt*. And tho' our Author ſeems to think that an Angel's appearing from Heaven would have been the higheſt Evidence poſſible, *p.* 11. yet I believe any one that impartially conſiders this matter, will be apt to conclude, that the Appearance of a ſingle Angel would have fallen vaſtly ſhort in Strength of Evidence, of that amazing Succeſſion of illuſtrious divine Atteſtations that were given to Chriſtianity; the like to which never was in proof of any falſe Religion, nor can be ſuppoſed to be in conſiſtency with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of divine Providence. For this would be to lay too great a Temptation in the way of his frail Creatures; ſince we cannot conceive, that ſuppoſing a Revelation really to have come from God, it could have been attended with more illuſtrious confirming Evidences of a divine Original, than all theſe taken together do form. And when to theſe external Atteſtations

is

is added the exemplary Purity of the great Founder of this Religion, the excellent Character of his Diſciples, ſo remote from that of Impoſtors, and from all worldly Views and carnal Intereſts; and the Nature and Tendency of the Religion thus atteſted, which is deſigned to reclaim Men from Idolatry, Vice, and Wickedneſs, to the Love of God, to his pure Worſhip, to the Practice of univerſal Holineſs and Virtue, and to the heavenly Mind and Life, it carries the Evidence as far as it can go. For this again furniſhes a new Proof, that as the Miracles were ſuch as vaſtly exceeded all human Power, ſo were they not owing to the Agency of ſuperior evil Beings; ſince it can never be imagined, that they would contribute their Aſſiſtance to the performing ſuch wonderful Things in favour of a Religion ſo directly oppoſite to all their Intereſts, and to the Deſigns evil Beings muſt be ſuppoſed to have in view. And therefore they muſt have been wrought by the immediate Aſſiſtance and Agency of God himſelf, or, which comes to the ſame thing, by the Aſſiſtance of good Beings ſuperior to Man, acting under him, and by his Direction, and who would never have thus given their Atteſtation to Fraud and Impoſture.

There is another thing which the Author offers, *p.* 47. and which he ſeems to deſign as an Argument. I would anſwer it if I underſtood it, but I confeſs I cannot well make ſenſe of it myſelf, nor have met with any body that could.

could. But as far as I am able to apprehend it, the Drift of it ſeems to be this; that ſuch Miracles as were wrought at the firſt Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity were to be expected as the natural Effects of ſuch a benevolent Religion as the Chriſtian, and therefore could not be Evidences of its Truth and Divinity: As if the ſame wonderful Works might not be both Inſtances of great Benevolence, and the Effects of a divine Power, and conſequently Proofs of a divine Interpoſition. And certainly if any Religion could be ſuppoſed to be of ſuch a nature, as neceſſarily to bring along with it ſuch glorious Effects of a divine Power and Benevolence, this would be a plain Evidence that it came from God.

This Gentleman having made an Attempt to ſhew that Miracles can in no caſe be any Proofs at all, afterwards ſeems willing in his great Liberality to grant, that Miracles might be Evidences to thoſe that actually ſaw them; but he denies they could be Evidences to any other Perſons. He affirms, that they could not be Proofs *even to the Men of that Generation that were not actually and perſonally preſent, when they were done, and that for the ſame evident Reaſon they can be none to us now*; p. 51. He goes on to declaim in many Words after his manner, and all that he urges here depends upon this Principle, that no Accounts of paſt Facts can at all be ſafely depended upon, and that no Man is to believe any thing but what he actually ſees with

with his own Eyes; That *the Teſtimony of Sight is by its Nature an Evidence not to be communicated.*——And *that the Light of Conviction which is thus received can extend no farther than to the Eye-witneſs himſelf, loſt and extinguiſhed the firſt Moment it is offered to be imparted*; p. 52, 53. A way of talking completely ridiculous, and theſe Gentlemen themſelves would eſteem it ſo, if applied to any other Subject. And the Reaſon he gives for it is no leſs ridiculous; that *all the Aſſurance in the World of another's ſeeing can never have an equal Effect upon my Senſes, or make me ſee a Thing where I was not actually preſent.* But tho' no Aſſurance of another Man's ſeeing a thing can make me ſee it, and who ever was ſo abſurd as to pretend it could have that Effect? yet it may lay a juſt Foundation for my believing it, and in ſome Caſes the Aſſurance may be ſo ſtrong, that I can no more reaſonably doubt of it than if I had ſeen it my ſelf.

In oppoſition to all this looſe Harangue, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that if the Miracles originally wrought in Atteſtation of Chriſtianity were Proofs to thoſe that actually ſaw them, then they are Proofs to us too, provided we have Evidence reaſonably ſufficient to convince us, that theſe extraordinary Facts were really done. So that ſtill the Queſtion returns to this, whether we have ſufficient reaſon to think, that the Accounts given us of thoſe Facts are to be depended upon, and that thoſe Facts were really per-

formed. For if ſo, they are as truly Evidences to us of the Truth and Divinity of that Revelation, in Atteſtation of which they were wrought, as they were to thoſe that ſaw them, or lived in the Age in which they were performed. If it be ſaid, none that live in ſucceeding Ages can have the ſame Evidence that thoſe of the firſt had; I anſwer, they cannot have ocular Evidence, and ſo it muſt be ſaid of all paſt Facts, or all Facts done at a diſtance from us; but yet they may have Evidence ſufficient to convince any conſidering Perſon that they were done; and an Evidence ſo ſtrongly cricumſtanced, that no Man can reaſonably deny it, without going upon the above-mentioned Principle, that he cannot ſafely believe any paſt Facts at all, or any thing but what he ſees with his own Eyes. And the Man that is obliged to take refuge here, is driven to as great an Abſurdity as can well be ſuppoſed; and plainly ſhews, that he has nothing reaſonable to ſay againſt the Credit of thoſe Facts. And yet this is the Shift this Writer is plainly reduced to. And this ſeems to be the Principle on which his Infidelity reſts; a manifeſt Proof that it is *not founded* on Reaſon or Argument.

It is on this Principle that he tells us, *p.* 52. That " that Divine Demonſtration to By-
" ſtanders, the Voice of God himſelf, *This is*
" *my beloved Son*, has been by one intervening
" Age dwindled long ſince to human Tradi-
" tion. God no longer bears witneſs to his
" Son,

"Son, but Men only bear witneſs to God." This may paſs for a pretty Jingle. The Antitheſis ſounds well enough, between *Men's bearing witneſs*, and *God's bearing witneſs*; but the Reaſoning is poor, and the Sentiment falſe. For if the wonderful Glory of Chriſt at his Transfiguration, and the Voice that then came to him was to be regarded as the Teſtimony of God to his Son in that Age, it is to be regarded as ſuch ſtill, provided we have ſufficient Evidence of the Reality of the Fact; and tho' we ourſelves did not ſee the Glory, nor hear the Voice, yet if we have good reaſon to believe that the Account of thoſe, who themſelves ſaw and heard it, is to be depended on, it ought in all reaſon to have an Influence upon us as really as if we had been preſent ourſelves. For the manner in which we come to know a thing does not alter the caſe; it is ſufficient, if we know it in ſuch a way as to have a reaſonable Conviction that it is true. And it is certain that in many caſes we can no more reaſonably doubt of things which we have by Information from others who ſaw and heard them, than if we ſaw and heard them ourſelves. And particularly it may be ſhewn, and often has been ſhewn with great Strength and Clearneſs, that there never was a Teſtimony more to be depended on than that of the Apoſtles, and firſt Witneſſes of Chriſtianity.

I need not take much notice of what he urges, *p.* 52. and which he backs with the Authority of the *Romiſh* Church, that if Miracles

were *neceſſary* at firſt in *the Infancy of the Goſpel, they are ſo ſtill*, and ought to be continued in the Church. For ſuppoſing the Authority of a divine Revelation ſufficiently confirmed by a Series of the moſt extraordinary divine Atteſtations at its firſt Eſtabliſhment, it would be an idle thing to expect that there ſhould be new Atteſtations and Miracles in every Age. It is ſufficient, that the Accounts of thoſe firſt original Atteſtations are tranſmitted to us in a manner that may be ſafely depended upon. To demand new Signs and Wonders to be continually done before our Eyes, would be perfectly unreaſonable. As juſtly might it be demanded, that all the extraordinary Facts that were done in the firſt Age, in Atteſtation of the Goſpel, ſhould be done over again in every Age. And as one Man, in one Age, and in one Country, hath as much right to expect and demand it as another, all theſe things muſt be repeated in the View, and for the Satisfaction of every ſingle Perſon in every Age, and in every Country. And what a ſtrange Scene of things this would introduce, how unfit and unbecoming the divine Wiſdom, is very evident! At that rate, nothing were to be ſeen but Signs and Wonders; and, by being ſo common, they would ceaſe to be extraordinary, and this very thing would hinder the Effect.

Our Author having endeavoured to ſhew, that our Saviour never appealed to the Underſtandings of Men, or laid before them any Evi-

dence

dence to convince them of his Divine Miſſion; that his Miracles were no Proofs of this at all, nor were ever intended by him as ſuch; and that the Accounts of them that are tranſmitted to us are not to be depended upon; that is, having endeavoured to remove every thing that could be ſuppoſed to lay a rational Foundation for believing, proceeds, *p.* 56, *&c.* to ſhew what it is that is deſigned in the Goſpel as the true Principle of our Faith; and this he reſolves entirely into the immediate *Revelation* of the Holy Ghoſt *imparted ſeparately and ſupernaturally to every Individual*, as he expreſſes it, *p.* 112. which *irradiates the Souls* of Believers at once, with *an irreſiſtible Light from Heaven, that flaſhes Conviction in a Moment*; and *thus our Faith is compleated in an inſtant, and the moſt perfect and finiſhed Creed produced at once, without any tedious Progreſs in Deductions of our own*; p. 59. This he repreſents as of ſuch a nature, as to render all outward Inſtructions entirely needleſs; ſo that we muſt not be left *to take any the leaſt Part of our Inſtructions from one another.* Nor need we have recourſe to the holy Scriptures, which he calls *Manuſcript Authorities and Paper Revelations*, or *concern our* ſelves at all about the *Credit of ancient Miracles*, or other Facts there recorded *. The Spirit alone is to do all without our own Reaſon, or the

* See the ſeveral Paſſages relating to this laid together in my former Letter, *p.* 11, *&c.* which therefore I need not particularly repeat here.

the Uſe of any Means on our parts. He aſſerts, that this Influence of the Spirit is promiſed to abide with all Chriſtians to the end of the World, to guide them infallibly in all Truth, ſo that they ſhould not be *left liable one Moment to a Poſſibility of Error and Impoſition.* That it is univerſal; it *is the Light which enlightneth every Man that cometh into the World:* That it cauſes Men to *think all alike*; and that on this Scheme alone, Men may be juſtly puniſhed for Hereſy and for Unbelief; ſince this muſt be owing to *a rebellious Oppoſition of the Influence of the Spirit,* and a *wilful* rejecting *his Sollicitations,* and a *Refuſal of his offered Grace.*

But I do not ſee how our Author can conſiſtently talk of Perſons reſiſting the Spirit, or what room there is left upon his Scheme for Unbelief, or for Hereſies at all. For ſince he ſuppoſes this Influence to be an *irreſiſtible Light,* inſtantaneous in its Effects, *infallible* in its Guidance, and the Effect of it to be the completing Faith at once, and infuſing the *whole Creed* in an inſtant, engaging Men to *think all alike,* and freeing them from all *Poſſibility of Error and Impoſition*; and ſince he at the ſame time ſuppoſes this Influence of the Spirit and infallible Inſpiration to be univerſal, imparted to every Individual, and extending to every Man that cometh into the World; it manifeſtly follows, that every Chriſtian, yea, every Man that cometh into the World, is irreſiſtibly enlightned, has his Faith abſolutely completed, is free from all

all Poſſibility of Error, and thinks exactly in all Points of Faith the ſame way with every other Man; and that therefore there can be no Unbelief, no Error, no Hereſy, no Difference of Sentiment among Men or Chriſtians.

Nothing can be more contrary to plain and undeniable Fact, more contradictory in all its Parts, and more evidently ſubverſive of itſelf, than the Scheme here advanced by this Writer. I am ſenſible this Gentleman will be ready to ſneer at the Charge. For undoubtedly he does not intend that the World ſhould look upon it as a thing which he himſelf believes. It is the *true ſcriptural and revealed Account of the Matter*, and the Scripture alone muſt anſwer for it. And therefore the more Contradictions are proved upon his Scheme, the better it will anſwer his Deſign, which is to expoſe Chriſtianity to the Deriſion and Contempt of Mankind.

But if it be made appear, that this is all groſs Miſrepreſentation; that the Account he is pleaſed to give us is as contrary to Scripture, as it is to Reaſon and Common Senſe, then the Contradictions and Abſurdities are to be charged upon the Author himſelf, and he is juſtly accountable for them. And this Attempt of his muſt only paſs for a Proof of his readineſs to take any Methods, how unfair or diſingenuous ſoever, to expoſe the Religion of *Jeſus*.

In order to anſwer his Deſign, he heaps together a number of Texts, without any regard to their particular Meaning and Intention, as they lie

in

in the ſacred Writings, and applies them all promiſcuouſly the ſame way. He every where confounds the extraordinary and ordinary Influence of the Holy Spirit; that which was peculiar to the Apoſtles, or to the firſt Age, he applies to Chriſtians in every Age; and if any thing extraordinary was done in ſome particular Caſes, he urges it as if it was deſigned to be the ſtanding Rule in every Caſe. Thus, to ſhew that the Holy Ghoſt *operates without delay, by an irreſiſtible Light from Heaven, that flaſhes Conviction in a moment*; he inſtances in the *happy Metamorphoſis of an officious Perſecutor into as zealous an Apoſtle*; p. 58, 59. But tho' the Converſion of St. *Paul*, taken in all its Circumſtances, was a ſignal Atteſtation to the Truth of Chriſtianity, it would be very abſurd to pretend to draw an Argument from ſuch an extraordinary Inſtance, to ſhew what are the ordinary Methods of God's dealings with Men in bringing them to the Faith of Chriſt. That Apoſtle declares concerning himſelf, that he *did not receive the Goſpel*, which he preached, *of Man, neither was he taught it, but by the Revelation of* Jeſus Chriſt, *Gal.* i. 12. But can it be concluded from thence, that every Chriſtian receives the Goſpel in the ſame immediate way from Chriſt himſelf, without any human Inſtruction? As well might it be ſaid, that when he declares concerning himſelf, that he was *an Apoſtle, not of Man, nor by Man*, his Intention was to ſignify, that all others were

Apoſtles

Apoſtles as well as he. Yet this is the Courſe of our Author's reaſoning, than which nothing can be more abſurd and ridiculous. And even with regard to this Caſe of the Converſion of St. *Paul*, his Faith in Chriſt though ſuddenly wrought was not unreaſonable, or without Evidence. His Underſtanding and Reaſon was fully convinced by what he heard and ſaw of the divine Power and Glory of a riſen Jeſus. And the Influence of the Holy Spirit upon his Mind, enduing him with extraordinary Gifts and Powers, was not a blind Impulſe to engage him to believe he knew not why (which is the Repreſentation this Gentleman is pleas'd to make of the Influence of the Spirit) but enabling him clearly to diſcern the Goſpel-evidence, and giving him a right Knowledge of the Chriſtian Religion, the whole Scheme of its Doctrines and Laws, its Proofs and Evidences, ſo that his Faith was in the ſtricteſt Senſe rational.

It is readily granted, that there was an extraordinary Influence of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles, who were choſen to be the firſt authorized Witneſſes of Chriſtianity, and had an immediate Commiſſion from Chriſt himſelf to publiſh his Religion to the World; I ſay, there was an extraordinary Influence of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, both for enabling them to perform the moſt illuſtrious Miracles, and for enduing them with ſpiritual Gifts, and infallibly guiding them in the Doctrines and Laws they were to deliver to the Church in the Name

of Chriſt. And there is nothing in this but what is highly reaſonable. For ſuppoſing God to give an extraordinary Revelation of his Will for the Inſtruction and Direction of Mankind, it was very proper that thoſe to whom he originally gave that Revelation to be by them publiſhed to the World in his Name, ſhould have their Minds extraordinarily illuminated in the Knowledge of the Doctrines and Laws they were to deliver as from him, ſo as to be kept from Error in delivering them; and that they ſhould alſo be enabled to produce ſufficient Credentials of their divine Miſſion, to convince Mankind that he ſent them. God's doing this in the Caſe of the Chriſtian Revelation has a manifeſt Propriety in it, and is an Inſtance of his great Wiſdom and Goodneſs. And it would be a ſtrange thing to pretend to argue from this that Chriſtianity is not on a rational Foundation, or that the Faith of the Goſpel cannot be an Aſſent founded on rational Conviction; when this very Thing is part of the Evidence on which Chriſtianity is founded, and which makes the Aſſent to it reaſonable. And yet this extraordinary Influence of the Holy Ghoſt, promiſed to and conferred upon the Apoſtles for theſe valuable Purpoſes, is what ſeveral of the Texts mentioned by this Writer refer to. Particularly thoſe Texts which he produces with ſo much Pomp, p. 57. *The Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, he ſhall teſtify of me.* And again, *The Spirit*

whom

whom I ſhall ſend ſhall lead you into all Truth. The former of theſe Paſſages, *The Spirit of Truth ſhall teſtify of me*, relates particularly to the Teſtimony given to Chriſt by the extraordinary Gifts and Operations of the Holy Spirit in that firſt Age. And accordingly our Lord after thoſe Words immediately adds, ſpeaking to his Apoſtles, *And ye alſo ſhall bear Witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the Beginning.* John xv. 26, 27. The other Text relates to the infallible Guidance promiſed to the Apoſtles to aſſiſt them in the executing of their Office. And accordingly, after ſaying, *The Spirit whom I ſhall ſend ſhall lead you into all Truth*, he adds, *and he will ſhew you Things to come.* Ch. xvi. 13. And before this, in the ſame Diſcourſe, he had promiſed, *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt—ſhall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.* Theſe Texts which plainly relate to the Apoſtles, and which in that View have nothing in them but what is proper and neceſſary, and highly for the Honour of Chriſtianity, are applied by this Gentleman, as if they contained a Promiſe of an infallible Guidance of the Spirit to all Chriſtians in every Age*; that they might not *be left liable one Moment*

* In like manner he endeavours to draw an Argument for that univerſal Inſpiration of all Chriſtians which he contends for, from the Promiſe made by our Saviour to his Apoſtles, *Matt.* x. 19, 20. where having told them

Moment to a Poſſibility of Error and Impoſition, as he expreſſes it, p. 60. A thing which is evidently abſurd and falſe in Fact. But then this Falſhood and Abſurdity is not chargeable on the Scripture Scheme, or upon the New Teſtament, but on our Author himſelf and his Miſrepreſentation of it.

Beſides

of the Perſecutions to which they ſhould be expoſed, and that they ſhould be *brought before Governours and Kings for his ſake*, he bids them *take no Thought how or what* they ſhould *ſpeak*; that is, not to be anxiouſly ſollicitous about it, which otherwiſe they might be apt to be; for that it ſhould *be given them in that ſame Hour what* they ſhould *ſpeak*; and adds, *For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Spirit of your Father that ſpeaketh in you.* By which, though our Saviour does not intend to ſignify, that all uſe and exerciſe of their own Reaſon was to be entirely ſuperſeded, as if they were not to have *ſo much as a ſingle Thought or Suggeſtion of their own*, as our Author gloſſes it; yet he certainly deſigns to ſignify that on ſuch Occaſions they ſhould not be left merely to themſelves, and their own Thoughts and Expreſſions, but that the Spirit ſhould aſſiſt them in both in an extraordinary manner: and this was wiſely and graciouſly provided for the Encouragement of the Apoſtles under the amazing Difficulties they were to encounter with in the firſt Promulgation of a Religion that was to meet with ſo much Oppoſition in the World. Yet from this extraordinary Caſe our Author ſeems willing to infer, that the *Spirit dictates Sentiments in ſecret to the Underſtandings* of all Chriſtians in every Age, and *miraculouſly ſpeaks* to them for their *Inſtruction*, and *gives them what to think as well as what to ſay*. p. 108, 109. And with equal Strength and Juſtice he might argue, that all Chriſtians have the Power of working Miracles, of *healing the Sick, cleanſing the Lepers*, and *raiſing the Dead*, becauſe our Saviour in that Chapter commiſſions and empowers his Apoſtles to do ſo. *ver.* 8.

Beſides the extraordinary Influence of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles to endue them with miraculous Powers, and to guide them infallibly in delivering the Doctrine of Chriſt; there was alſo a plentiful Effuſion of the Spirit upon the firſt Chriſtians, though not in the ſame degree with the Apoſtles, which contributed mightily to the ſpreading and propagating the Chriſtian Faith. And conſidering that the Chriſtian Religion at its firſt Publication had almoſt inſuperable Obſtacles to encounter with in a World ſunk in Idolatry, Superſtition, and Vice, there was then great need of an extraordinary Meaſure of divine Influences to accompany the preaching of the Goſpel among thoſe to whom it was publiſhed. And its making ſo ſpeedy and wonderful a Progreſs as it did in face of the greateſt Oppoſition, when it had the inveterate Prejudices, the corrupt Appetites and Paſſions of Men engaged againſt it, and no worldly Advantages on its ſide, furniſheth an additional Proof of its divine Original, and ſhewed a ſignal Interpoſition of Heaven in its favour, and a divine Light and Power accompanying it. And if a Revelation that was at firſt propagated in a way that beſpoke an extraordinary divine Power and Preſence, is alſo of ſuch a nature, that it will bear the cooleſt Examination; if its Proofs and Evidences approve themſelves to our impartial Reaſon, and its Doctrines and Laws appear to be worthy of God and of the moſt excellent Tendency, there is every thing that

can juſtly be deſired to make our Aſſent to it rational and well-founded. And this is the Caſe of the Chriſtian Revelation.

I doubt not, that upon a critical Examination of the Texts produced by this Writer, it would appear that ſeveral of them, beſides thoſe already mentioned, relate to the firſt Chriſtians, and to the extraordinary Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt in that Age. Of this kind that Text appears to me to be, which he mentions in the firſt place, and on which he ſeems to lay a particular Streſs, *No Man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt.* It is taken from 1 *Cor.* xii. 3. where St. *Paul* is profeſſedly diſcourſing concerning the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit poured forth in that firſt Age, and the Perſons endued with thoſe Gifts. And after declaring, that *No Man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jeſus accurſed*, which relates to thoſe Jewiſh Teachers that went about anathematizing the Name of Jeſus, and at the ſame time made high Pretenſions to the Holy Ghoſt, which they would not allow any Gentiles could be Partakers of; he adds, *No Man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt*, where he probably refers to thoſe who in that firſt Age preached the Goſpel, and confirmed it by Miracles, and the extraordinary Gifts conferred upon them; which ſhewed ſuch Perſons were Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, though ſeveral of them had been originally Gentiles, without whoſe divine Aſſiſtance and Influence they could not

not have done this: This ſeems to be the proper Intention of this Paſſage. Though if it were taken in a more general Senſe, to ſignify that the gracious Aſſiſtance of God's holy Spirit is neceſſary to our believing and acknowledging Chriſt in a right manner, ſo as heartily to receive and ſubmit to him as our Lord (for no body can ſuppoſe that the bare ſaying in Words, that *Jeſus is the Lord* is all that is intended) there is nothing abſurd in ſuch an Interpretation. I freely grant what Chriſtians have generally acknowledged, that there is an Influence of the divine Spirit ſtill communicated for aſſiſting Men of ſincere and upright Minds in the Knowledge and Belief of the Chriſtian Religion, and in the Practice of the Duties there required. Nor is there any thing in this, but what is perfectly agreeable to right Reaſon, and the juſteſt Notions we can form both of Man's preſent Weakneſs and Infirmity, and of the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs; provided we take this along with us, that theſe gracious Aſſiſtances are communicated in a way perfectly agreeable to the juſt Order of our Faculties, and without offering Violence to the Freedom that belongs to us as reaſonable Creatures, moral Agents, and ſo as not to render our own Endeavours needleſs, but to aſſiſt and animate our Endeavours *. And it is manifeſt, that ſuch is the Repre-

* That God can communicate his gracious Aſſiſtances to the human Mind in a manner perfectly well accommodated

Repreſentation made to us in the ſacred Writings of the Influence of the Holy Spirit, ordinarily communicated to Chriſtians.

The Author produces ſome Paſſages to ſhew, that Believers are repreſented as the *Temples* of God, and as having his Holy Spirit *dwelling* and abiding in them. Theſe are noble Paſſages, which do honour to the ſacred Writings. They are full of Conſolation, and capable of being improved to the moſt excellent Purpoſes. For what can be a greater Encouragement, or a more powerful Incentive to the Practice of Virtue, than to be aſſured that God is graciouſly preſent with good Men, ever ready to aſſiſt, guide, and comfort them by his Spirit? But then it is extremely evident, from the whole Tenour of the Scriptures, that this is ſuppoſed to be ſuch a

modated to our Nature, and ſo as to leave us the juſt Exerciſe of our own Reaſon and Freedom, no Man that has a right Notion either of God or Man can reaſonably doubt; and it can as little be doubted that it is agreeable to his Goodneſs to do ſo. And if we cannot diſtinctly explain the manner of this divine Influence, which is chiefly diſcernible in the Effects, (and I readily grant this Author, that our Saviour ſeems to intimate this in the Texts produced by him, *p.* 107, 108.) he muſt be a ſmall Proficient in Philoſophy, that would look upon this to be a ſufficient Objection againſt the Reality of it. Since no Man that has ſearched into the Nature of Things needs be told, that there are many Things the Certainty of which cannot reaſonably be doubted, tho' the manner of their Exiſtence and Operations be what we are not able to explain. And this particularly is the Caſe with regard to God's providential Concourſe with his Creatures.

a Preſence and Influence, as not to exclude the Uſe of proper Means on our parts, or the Exerciſe of our own rational and moral Powers. So when the *Spirit* is repreſented as *witneſſing with our Spirits*, which is another Paſſage referred to by this Writer; the very Manner of Expreſſion plainly ſhews that the Concurrence of our own Spirits, the Exerciſe of our own Reaſon and Conſideration is neceſſarily ſuppoſed. And in like manner when St. *John* ſaith, that *he that believeth on the Son of God hath the Witneſs in himſelf*, 1 John v. 10. this is not deſigned in oppoſition to all outward Teſtimony. For he begins his Epiſtle with putting thoſe, to whom he writes, in mind of the Teſtimony of him and the other Apoſtles concerning the Things they had heard and ſeen, as what had a great influence in engaging them to believe. Nor does it by any means exclude rational Arguments and Evidence. All outward Helps and Means are taken in, in order to the producing that inward Witneſs or Teſtimony in a Man's own Breaſt, which is then eſpecially completed, when beſides the external Evidences and Atteſtations given to the Truth of Chriſtianity, the Believer has a ſtrong Senſe and Perception of the great Excellency of the Religion of *Jeſus*, and of the Characters of divine Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Purity ſhining forth in it, and feels its happy Influence upon his own Soul in purifying his Heart, and reforming his Life. Such a Perſon may not unfitly be ſaid to have the Wit-

neſs in himſelf; and ſurely this is perfectly conſiſtent with his having a rational Conviction of the Truth of Chriſtianity.

If Faith is repreſented, as this Gentleman obſerves, to be *not of our ſelves*, but to be *the Gift of God*, this is agreeable to the devout Language of the ſacred Writings, which teach us to aſcribe every good thing that is in us eminently to God, *from whom every good Gift doth deſcend.* Thus we are told, that it *is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleaſure:* yet it is evident, that this is not to be underſtood ſo as to exclude our own Endeavours. For we are at the ſame time exhorted to *work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* So we are to apply to God to *make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing and acceptable in his ſight*; but it is manifeſt from the whole Tenour of the New Teſtament, that we muſt *give all Diligence* that we may *grow in Grace* and Virtue, and muſt uſe our utmoſt Care and earneſt Endeavours, to ſtir up our own Powers to the Performance of our Duty, and to cultivate and improve good Affections and Diſpoſitions in our Souls. In like manner, with reſpect to Faith, it is ſo the Gift of God as not to exclude the Concurrence of our own rational Powers, or the Uſe of proper Arguments fitted to work a rational Conviction in the Underſtanding. Chriſtians are exhorted to *build up themſelves in their moſt holy Faith*; and when they

they do not grow in Faith, this is ſtill ſuppoſed to be their own fault, and to be owing to the Negligence and Indiſpoſition of their own Minds.

With regard to thoſe Paſſages, where our Saviour declares, *No Man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath ſent me, draw him*; and *every Man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me*: And again, *No Man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father*: Not to inſiſt on the different Explications that have been given of them, let us grant that they are deſigned to ſignify the Neceſſity of a divine Aſſiſtance in order to a ſincere Belief and Acceptance of *Jeſus Chriſt*, iſſuing in a dutiful Obedience to his Laws, and a hearty Compliance with the Terms of the Goſpel-Covenant; yet ſtill it is manifeſt, that this divine Aſſiſtance implies the Uſe of proper Means and Endeavours on our parts, and the Exerciſe of our own Reaſon, and a careful attending to the Evidence that is offered. Our Saviour all along in his Diſcourſes with the *Jews* ſuppoſes there was ſufficient Evidence to engage Men to believe, and he fairly lays that Evidence before them; appealing to the Scriptures, to the mighty Works which the Father had given him to do, and the excellent Doctrine which he ſent him to teach. And thoſe who with teachable Minds received the convincing Evidence and Teſtimony that God gave to his Son, ſo as to be thereby effectually engaged to

believe and to obey him, might be properly ſaid to be *drawn and taught of God*, and to have *heard and learned of the Father*. And on the other hand, when our Lord declares concerning the unbelieving *Jews*, that it was not *given to them of the Father* to *come* to him; his Intention is not to excuſe their Infidelity by caſting the Cauſe of it upon God, but rather to aggravate their Guilt, in not receiving and attending to the Evidence and Teſtimony that the Father had given to him, which was owing to the bad Diſpoſitions of their Minds. For he every where charges their Unbelief upon their own perverſe Wills, and corrupt Affections, and their hardning their Hearts and ſhutting their Eyes againſt Evidence *. In which caſe it was juſt with God to give them up to their own Hardneſs and Obſtinacy.

Upon the whole, allowing all that can be juſtly demanded, that in the preſent Darkneſs and Corruption of Mankind a divine Aſſiſtance is neceſſary the more effectually to recommend Religion, and engage us to believe and embrace it, and give it its due Weight and Influence upon our Minds; which Aſſiſtance God is ready to impart to thoſe who humbly apply to him for it, and who are ſincerely deſirous to know and do his Will; this indeed is a very good Reaſon for our applying to God by Prayer for his divine Aids, as good Men have always done; but no Argument can be drawn from it to

* See Matt. xiii. 15. John iii. 19, 20. v. 40, 44.

to prove, that it is needleſs for us to uſe our own Endeavours; ſince this divine Aſſiſtance is not intended to exclude, but rather to encourage the Uſe of proper Means and Endeavours on our parts. Nor doth it in any wiſe follow from it, that Religion is not in it ſelf a reaſonable thing. For all the Arguments and Motives of Religion are ſtill maintained in their full Force. And the gracious Proviſion God hath in his great Goodneſs made for aſſiſting our preſent Weakneſs and Infirmity by the Aids of his Holy Spirit, ſhould make us more diligent to uſe our beſt Endeavours to underſtand Religion and to practiſe it; in which caſe this divine Aſſiſtance will be an ineſtimable Advantage to us. But if by our Pride and Obſtinacy, and bad Diſpoſitions, we reject the Evidences of Religion, and reſiſt the Methods of his Grace towards us, this muſt greatly heighten our Guilt, and expoſe us to a more aggravated Condemnation. This Gentleman himſelf ſeems in Words to acknowledge this. How he can do it in conſiſtency with his Scheme, I do not ſee. But ſuppoſing the Account now given of the Nature and Deſign of this Influence to be true, what he ſaith on this head is juſt and reaſonable. That "the Tender of this Conviction, "however potent in its Influence, muſt yet de- "pend greatly upon the proper Diſpoſition of "our Minds to give it reception for its Effi- "cacy, and ſo far will afford ample Matter for "Trial and Probation." That "a rebellious "Oppoſition of the gracious Influence of the

"divine

" divine Spirit deſerves a ſevere Reſentment;" and that " with all Juſtice we may in that caſe " be call'd to a ſtrict Account for our Obſti- " nacy, Impiety, and Perverſeneſs." *p.* 63, 64. And again he talks of " a ſevere Reprehenſion " juſtly due to a rebellious Refuſal and Diſclaim " of proffered Grace;" *p.* 66. and of " God's " withholding Light from ſuch as chuſe to ſit " in Darkneſs, and by their Ingratitude and " Neglect have rendered themſelves unworthy " of all farther Sollicitations." Theſe Expreſ- ſions, tho' not in the Senſe intended by this Writer, contain awful Truths, which I heartily wiſh he would ſeriouſly conſider, tho' it is very likely he will not thank me for any Concern I can be under on his account.

Thus I have conſidered the Account this Gentleman gives of the Influence of the Holy Ghoſt, which proves nothing but his own Unfairneſs, and the great Liberties he allows himſelf in miſrepreſenting the Scriptures, and ridiculing the moſt Sacred Things. For no two things can be more oppoſite to one another than the *true Scriptural Account of this Matter*, and that which this Writer would put upon us as ſuch. The Influence of the Spirit, according to his Repreſentation of it, ſuperſedes the Exerciſe of our own Reaſon, and the Uſe of our own Endeavours; but it is evident, not merely from one or two Paſſages ſeparately conſidered, but from the general Courſe and Tenour of the New

New Teſtament, that the divine Aſſiſtances there promiſed are conſiſtent with the Exerciſe of our own Reaſon and Underſtanding, and are deſigned to take in the Uſe of all proper Means and Endeavours. The Spirit, as he repreſents it, renders the Scriptures entirely uſeleſs, and leads to a Neglect or Contempt of them *; but it is not the good Spirit of *Chriſt* that inſpires a Contempt of the Scriptures, which are every where referred to by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, as of great Authority and Uſe, and are repreſented as *able to make us wiſe unto Salvation*, and to make the *Man of God perfect*, &c. According to his Account of the Spirit, it has no regard to the Miracles and other extraordinary Facts and Atteſtations recorded in the Goſpel, as of any Uſe or Significancy; but it is undeniably evident, that in the New Teſtament a great ſtreſs is laid upon theſe things, as illuſtrious Proofs and Evidences of Chriſtianity, and that the Accounts of them were written for this end and purpoſe, to engage us to believe. The Spirit communicated to all Chriſtians, if we may believe him, excludes all outward Teaching; ſo that we are not *to receive the leaſt part of our Knowledge or Inſtruction from one another*; whereas, according to the Goſpel, the Influence

* He calls the Scriptures by way of Contempt, *Manuſcript Authorities and Paper Revelations*; as if a Revelation loſt its Authority and Uſe by being committed to Writing. He may, if he pleaſes, call our Laws and publick Records, *Paper-Laws and Authorities*; but I queſtion, whether this would be thought ſufficient to deſtroy their Authority.

fluence of the Spirit does not render outward Teaching needleſs, which is all along there ſuppoſed to be of great uſe and neceſſity; and there is Proviſion made for its ſtanding Continuance in the Church for the Inſtruction and Edification of Chriſtians in all Ages. The Spirit, according to his Repreſentation, engages Perſons to believe at once, by a ſtrong and irreſiſtible Impulſe, without Reaſon or Evidence, ſo that Faith is completed in an inſtant. But in the New Teſtament, the Faith of Chriſtians is not ſuppoſed to be ordinarily begun and completed at once, or to be produced without any Reaſon that could lay a juſt Foundation for believing; but to be founded on ſufficient Evidence, and capable of continual Growth and Improvement. He repreſents the Holy Ghoſt as abiding with all Chriſtians as their infallible Guide, ſo as to preſerve them from *all Poſſibility of Error and Impoſition*; and to cauſe them to *think all alike**. According

* To ſhew that the Influence and infallible Guidance of the Spirit is univerſal, our Author produces that Text, *This is the Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, which has no relation to any ſuch infallible Guidance of the Spirit at all. The Evangeliſt is there ſpeaking of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, that he is the *true Light, which coming into the World enlightneth every Man*, as the Words might be very properly rendered; which ſignifies no more than our Saviour himſelf intends, when he ſaith, *I am the Light of the World*. The Deſign of ſuch Expreſſions is to ſignify, in oppoſition to the narrow Notions of the *Jews*, who were for confining the Benefit of the Meſſiah to their own Nation, that he was deſign'd to be an univerſal Bleſſing; that he came to inſtruct and enlighten

According to which Scheme, it is impoſſible there ſhould be any Errors or Differences of Opinion among Chriſtians. Whereas in the Goſpel it is all along ſuppoſed, that Perſons may be weak in the Faith, tho' ſincere; that they may differ from one another, that they are liable to Errors and Miſtakes; and it is expreſsly foretold, that there ſhall be Hereſies among them.

I need not take any particular Notice of the Inſinuations he makes, *p.* 61. that the ſacred Writings are corrupted; a Charge which has ſo often been refuted and expoſed with great Strength and Clearneſs. And as to what he talks of, *p.* 62, 63. as if no Man could underſtand the Scriptures without a great deal of Learning and Criticiſm, and being well read in profane Hiſtory, it will be readily own'd that theſe are good Helps for a better underſtanding many Paſſages of Scripture; and it is our great Advantage that we have many ſuch Helps in our own Language, which the Unlearned may

enlighten *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*. He was to be *a Light to lighten the* Gentiles, as well as the *Glory of his People* Iſrael. This alſo is the Intention of that other Paſſage he produces, *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation* (by which we are there evidently to underſtand the Goſpel of *Jeſus*) *hath appered unto all Men*; in which ſenſe St. *Paul* elſewhere declares, that the *Goſpel was gone into all the World*, and that it was *preached to every Creature which is under Heaven*. Theſe are ſtrong Expreſſions to ſignify, that the Goſpel is deſigned for the Benefit of all Mankind, that the Offers of it are univerſal, and that it actually made a wonderful Progreſs in a ſhort time thro' a great Part of the then known World.

have the benefit of. But the main Principles and Duties of Chriſtianity are ſo frequently repeated and plainly inculcated, that a Man of common Underſtanding may, without any nice Criticiſm or Acquaintance with Hiſtory, by a careful conſidering the Scripture, underſtand them as far as is really neceſſary for Faith or Practice.

This Gentleman having aſſigned what he calls *the true Principle of Goſpel-Evidence*, proceeds in the remaining Part of his Pamphlet to heap up many things without much order, to ſhew that Faith is not only not founded in Reaſon, but directly contrary to it; and that there is an *irreconcilable Oppoſition*, as he expreſſes it, *between the Faith of Grace and the Faith of Reaſon.*

The Proofs he pretends to bring of this from Scripture are very weak, and indeed ſcarce deſerve a particular Conſideration. Thus he argues from our Saviour's declaring that *no Man can receive the Goſpel except he receive it as a little Child*, which he explains as if Chriſt required that Perſons in order to their receiving his Religion ſhould be Children in Underſtanding; when it is manifeſt, that what he intends is, that they ſhould be like Children in Humility and Innocence, and a freedom from Pride and Ambition, and from carnal vicious Prejudices *. Thoſe Words of the Apoſtle *Paul* effectually obviate ſuch Miſconſtructions; *Brethren, be not Children in Underſtanding: howbeit*

* Matt. xviii. 3, 4.

beit in Malice be ye Children, but in Underſtanding be Men *. In like manner St. *Peter* exhorts us to receive the Word as *Babes*, but what he intends by it he himſelf explains, that it is a *laying aſide all Malice, and all Guile and Hypocriſies, and Envies and Evil-ſpeaking* †. And on the other hand, being *Babes* in reſpect of Knowledge, or *unſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs*, is repreſented as a Fault in Chriſtians, for which they are reproved ‡.

If the Apoſtle deſcribes Faith to be the *Evidence of things not ſeen*, this does not prove that there is an Inconſiſtency and Oppoſition between Faith and Reaſon, though this Gentleman attempts to bring an Argument from it to ſerve his purpoſe, *p.* 77. On the contrary, it appears from this very Deſcription of Faith, that tho' the Object of it be *Things not ſeen*, yet Faith gives ſuch an *Evidence* of them (and the Word there uſed properly ſignifies an argumentative Evidence) as is ſufficient to ſatisfy the Mind of their Truth and Reality. The firſt Inſtance of Faith there produced is this, that by *Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God, ſo that Things which are ſeen were not made of Things which do appear.* ver. 3. And it is repreſented as the main Principle of Faith, that *he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* ver. 6. And in both

* 1 Cor. xiv. 20. † Pet. ii. 1, 2. ‡ Heb. v. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

theſe Caſes, though the Things to be believed are Things removed from our bodily Senſes, yet the believing them is no way inconſiſtent with Reaſon, but perfectly agreeable to it. The other Inſtances of Faith recorded in that Chapter are high Inſtances of Truſt in God, and Reliance on his Promiſe and Faithfulneſs, his Power and Goodneſs, even in very difficult Circumſtances. But in none of them was Faith contrary to Reaſon. Our Author indeed would fain have the Faith of *Abraham* paſs for an unreaſonable one, becauſe it is ſaid, that *againſt Hope he believed in Hope*; the Meaning of which is no more than this, that he believed a Thing which ſeemed very improbable, and contrary to the common Courſe of Things: yet he did not believe againſt Reaſon; for as he had ſufficient Aſſurance that God had promiſed it, ſo he *was fully perſuaded that what he had promiſed he was able alſo to perform.* And there was nothing in this way of judging, but what right Reaſon muſt approve. See *Rom.* iv. 18, 20, 21.

Our Author thinks it a hard Caſe, *p.* 78. that *Zachariah* ſhould be ſtruck dumb for *heſitating* about a Thing contrary to the *common Courſe of Nature*; but ſuppoſing him to have believed that it was an Angel that came to him with a Meſſage from God, Reaſon ought to have led him to conclude, that it was a Thing not beyond the divine Power; and his being ſtruck dumb for a time, was both deſigned as a Chaſtiſement

tiſement for his Fault in heſitating, and as a Sign to himſelf and others too of the Certainty of the Event foretold. And whereas he alſo thinks our Saviour was in the wrong to reprove his Diſciples as of *little Faith*, becauſe they thought *they were going to be drowned when the* Ship was *ſinking under them*, and it would have been a *Sin againſt common Senſe to have thought otherwiſe*; it is manifeſt the Reproof was juſt. For if their Faith had been as ſtrong as in reaſon it ought to have been, conſidering the many illuſtrious Proofs they had ſeen before this of Chriſt's divine Power, they needed not to have been afraid of periſhing, when they had him with them.

When our Saviour ſaid to *Thomas*, *becauſe thou haſt ſeen, thou haſt believed*; *bleſſed are they which have not ſeen, and yet have believed*; he did not intend to pronounce thoſe bleſſed who ſhould believe without any Reaſon at all, as this Gentleman inſinuates; but he blames *Thomas* for not believing that he was riſen from the dead, except he himſelf ſaw him with his own Eyes; though he had Reaſon ſufficient to believe it, both becauſe he knew that it was what Chriſt himſelf had foretold and promiſed whilſt alive, and becauſe it was confirm'd to him by the concurring Teſtimony of thoſe who had ſeen him after he was riſen. So that our Saviour here condemns the Principle of thoſe who are not for believing a Thing, however well atteſted, except it be confirm'd to them by the

Teſtimony

Teſtimony of their own Senſes; which is the very Principle this Gentleman proceeds upon; a Principle perfectly unreaſonable, and which all the World owns to be ſo in every other Caſe.

He produces with great Pomp that Paſſage *Rom.* x. 6—10. *The Righteouſneſs which is by Faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe; Say not in thine Heart, who ſhall aſcend up into Heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down from above) Or, who ſhall deſcend into the Deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead.) But what ſaith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that is, the Word of Faith which we preach. For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation.* I am not ſo clear-ſighted as this Gentleman, who ſees in this Text a full Demonſtration that the Faith required in the Goſpel is not a rational one. To me the contrary appears here to be ſuppoſed, *viz.* that the Goſpel does not inſiſt upon impracticable Conditions, and that the Faith of the Goſpel is founded upon Evidence not very abſtruſe, and above our Capacity, but ſuch as is clear and obvious to a ſincere and well-diſpoſed Mind.

It would be more to his purpoſe, if it were true, what he alledges, *p.* 84. That "there is "no one Leſſon, that the holy Writings have "taken more Care to inculcate, than that of "denying our Reaſon to give our Faith Scope."

For

For a proof of this, he only brings one Text, and that he ſtrangely miſrepreſents. He aſks, "Are we not ſtrictly enjoin'd to *captivate Rea-* "*ſon to the Obedience of Faith?*" And his Comment upon it is this, "*To captivate*, to "lay it under the moſt abſolute Reſtraint and "Prohibition, not to permit it the leaſt Op- "portunity or Freedom to exert itſelf, or in- "terpoſe on any Occaſion whatever." The Paſſage he refers to is 2 *Cor.* x. 5. where St. *Paul* expreſſes himſelf thus, *Though we walk in the Fleſh, we do not war after the Fleſh. For the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong Holds, caſting down Imaginations* or *Reaſonings, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Chriſt.* His Intention is not to ſignify, that what he taught was contrary to right Reaſon, or that when he converted Perſons to the Faith, he obliged them to renounce their Underſtandings, or to believe without Reaſon or againſt it; but his Deſign is plainly to ſhew the great Succeſs of his Miniſtry, in ſubduing all oppoſite Prejudices and Reaſonings; which he expreſſes by *caſting them down* and bringing them *into Captivity*, to carry on the Metaphor, becauſe he had compared his Miniſtry to a *Warfare*. But ſtill this Succeſs was owing to ſuperior Evidence, which carried a greater Conviction than any Reaſonings that could be brought againſt it.

Thus

Thus this Paſſage, which is only deſigned to ſhew the ſtrong and convincing Evidence, and the Proofs of a divine Power and Original whereby the Goſpel was eſtabliſhed, is uſed by our Author to ſhew, that the Faith of the Goſpel is contrary to Reaſon. And though there be no *Injunction* here at all of any kind, yet he improves it into a general ſtrict *Injunction* to all Chriſtians, *never to exert* their *Reaſon upon any Occaſion whatſoever.*

It is with the ſame Candour that he obſerves, that "the Scripture-Teſt and Standard for finding out the Spirit of Truth is no more than this: *Hereby ye ſhall know them—Every one that confeſſeth that Chriſt is come in the Fleſh is of God.* Now this is evidently what Philoſophers call arguing in a Circle, and begging the Queſtion. But in Faith it is a neceſſary Preliminary, He *that cometh to Chriſt muſt believe that he* is." *p.* 78.

Here he repreſents it, as if the Scripture propoſed to us to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, without any Proof at all, but only the bare Word of thoſe that firſt preached and publiſhed it; and that the firſt Principle of Faith is a taking for granted the very Thing that is to be proved. Can any thing be more unfair and diſingenuous, when the Deſign of the whole Goſpel is to ſhew that Chriſt's divine Miſſion was confirmed by the moſt illuſtrious Evidences, and divine Atteſtations? And it is manifeſt, that in the Paſſages here referred to by this Writer, all

all theſe Evidences are ſuppoſed. The Apoſtle *John* is here writing to thoſe who were already Chriſtians upon full convincing Evidence, and whom he ſuppoſes to be well appriz'd of the main Doctrines of Chriſtianity *. And to ſuch Perſons he might juſtly lay it down as a Mark or Teſt, by which they might diſtinguiſh thoſe falſe Prophets or Teachers, which he tells them were then *gone out into the World*, that they *denied* Jeſus to be the *Chriſt*, or *confeſſed* him not to be *come in the Fleſh*, whoſe divine Miſſion had been confirmed by ſuch ſignal Atteſtations, and convincing Evidences. For it is in all Caſes allowed reaſonable, when a Truth has been ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, to make uſe of it as a Principle by which to detect and expoſe Falſhoods.

Our Author, who has a knack of applying Scripture in a way that no Man but himſelf would have thought of, would fain extract a ſort of Proof that Faith is not a rational thing, from our being required to hold *the Faith, not in Unity of Underſtanding*, as he gloſſes it, but *in the Bond of Peace, and Unity of the Spirit*, *p.* 75. He plainly refers to that admirable Paſſage of the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Eph.* iv. 2, 3. where we are exhorted to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; a Paſſage that does honour to the ſacred Writings, and which is deſigned to ſignify that we ſhould be united in Peace and Love, tho' not in all things exactly of

* See 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. ii. 13, 21, 24, 27.

the ſame Opinion; concerning which ſee my former Letter, *p.* 19. He alſo inſinuates, *p.* 76. that the Apoſtle approves the Diſtinction between *Faith and Underſtanding*, when he affirms of the Caſe "of repeating Prayers in an "unknown Tongue, that we may *pray with* "*the Spirit*, tho' not with the *Underſtanding*." As if the Apoſtle's Meaning was, that he that pray'd with the Spirit did not himſelf underſtand what he pray'd; whereas it is extremely evident to any one that examines that Chapter, that the Apoſtle there plainly ſuppoſes, that the Perſon that pray'd in an unknown Tongue did himſelf underſtand what he pray'd, and was *edified* by it, but that if he did not interpret what he pray'd, others did not underſtand him.

He would alſo improve it as a Preſumption againſt the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, that not *many wiſe Men after the Fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called*, p. 79. and he frequently obſerves, that the firſt Publiſhers of it were *illiterate Perſons, no Proficients in any Science*. And probably, if many of the firſt Publiſhers of Chriſtianity, or the firſt Converts to it, had been Perſons of Eminence for Riches and Power, and for their Station in the World, or had been great Philoſophers, renowned for Learning and Eloquence, thoſe who now affect to deſpiſe Chriſtianity for the Meanneſs of thoſe who firſt publiſhed and embraced it, would have regarded this as a ſtrong Preſumption,

ſumption, that the Chriſtian Religion was a Contrivance owing to the Genius and Policy, or Intereſt of its firſt Publiſhers; and that the Progreſs it made was to be attributed to theſe Advantages. But it pleaſed God in his Wiſdom ſo to order it, as to leave no room for Pretences of this kind. The Character and Circumſtances of thoſe that were firſt employ'd in publiſhing the Goſpel, afford a convincing Argument, that the Religion they publiſhed was not of their own Invention, nor was the Succeſs they met with owing to human Power or Authority, or to their own Learning and Eloquence, or to any worldly Advantages, but to the Force of Evidence, and a divine Preſence and Bleſſing accompanying it.

But he urges farther, that " if Chriſtianity " had proceeded upon rational Principles, it " could never certainly have laboured under " all that Contempt in the eye of the " learned World, which it did." *p.* 71. And here he breaks out into a high Encomium of the Age in which Chriſtianity firſt appeared; that " Reaſon was then ſure to have the faireſt " play imaginable; never were her Friends, " the profeſs'd Searchers for Truth, more coun- " tenanced and encouraged; and the World " was never better diſpoſed to attend the can- " vaſſing things by Argument, if that had been " the ground they went upon."

It will be acknowledged, that at the time when Chriſtianity appeared, the Knowledge of

the Arts, Eloquence and Politeneſs, had ſpread conſiderably; and Men in general, it is to be preſumed, were better qualified for examining and judging, than in a leſs learned and civilized Age they would have been. And the Chriſtian Religion's making ſo great a Progreſs as it did, in ſuch an Age as this, and in the *Roman* Empire, the moſt knowing and civilized Part of the World, is a Circumſtance very much to its Honour, more than if it had been at firſt preached among rude and barbarous Nations, quite uncultivated, and deſtitute of all Learning and Improvement. It is true, it did not meet with a ready Reception among thoſe who then took upon them the Name of Philoſophers; nor ought this to be turned to its diſadvantage; ſince there were no Perſons leſs diſpoſed for an unprejudiced Enquiry into the nature of this Religion, than they were. Some of them, as particularly the *Epicureans*, which was then the moſt numerous and prevailing Sect, denied a Providence, and ridiculed all Religion as Superſtition. Others of them, with the Scepticks, bent the whole Force of their Wit and Subtilty to ſubvert all Evidence of Reaſon, and ſhew that Truth and Certainty is not any where to be found. And with regard to the ſeveral other Sects of Philoſophers it may be obſerved, that they generally thought themſelves in honour obliged to ſtand up for what were looked upon as the diſtinguiſhing Tenets of their particular Sect, and the Dictates of their ſeveral Founders.

Such

Such Men blown up with a vain Conceit of their own ſuperior Wiſdom and Learning, would be apt to think it beneath them to rank themſelves among the Diſciples of a crucified *Jeſus*, or to receive Inſtructions from the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity: Men not bred up in the Schools of Philoſophers, and who made no Oſtentation of their Learning and Eloquence. Any Man of common Underſtanding, and good Diſpoſitions, not liſted into any Party of Philoſophers, was certainly in a fairer way of judging impartially of Truth than they generally were. If therefore the Apoſtle warns thoſe to whom he writes, to *beware leſt any* ſhould *ſpoil them thro' Philoſophy and vain Deceit*; this Caution is very reconcilable with the Suppoſition of the Chriſtian Religion's being agreeable to Reaſon. And it is with great Juſtice that he pronounces concerning many of thoſe that were then called Philoſophers, that *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they became Fools: They became vain in their Imaginations, and their fooliſh Heart was darkned.*

If there were Perſons of eminent Parts and Learning, and ſtrong Reaſon, that were Enemies to Chriſtianity, both at its firſt Appearance, and afterwards, it may be juſtly preſumed to have been very much owing to their not taking pains to examine into that Religion, and conſider the Evidence brought for it. This may well be ſuppoſed, when ſuch Men as *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*, ſo exact in other matters, ſhew themſelves ſo ſtrangely negligent and ignorant

in

in what relates to the *Jews* and Chriſtians, and ſpeak of them according to popular Reports and Prejudices; without ever, as far as appears, giving themſelves the trouble to get any certain Information concerning them, or the Principles they profeſſed. And tho' *Pliny* with more Candour gives an honourable Teſtimony to the Probity of the primitive Chriſtians, yet it is very evident from the Account he gives, that he did not concern himſelf to make any diſtinct Enquiry into the Nature of their Religion, its Doctrines and Principles, or the Evidence that could be produced for it. This ſeems to have been the general Diſpoſition of the Heathens with regard to Chriſtianity; and no wonder that thoſe who were ſo negligent and ſuperficial in their Enquiries, did not embrace a Religion ſo contrary to that which was eſtabliſhed, and to their worldly Reputation and Intereſts. But yet it is certain, that there were many excellent Philoſophers, and other Perſons of Note and Eminency, that overcame all their Prejudices, and embraced the Chriſtian Faith, before it had the Countenance of the Civil Authority. Many of the ancient Apologiſts for Chriſtianity were Perſons of conſiderable Learning and Eloquence, and extremely well verſed in the *Pagan* Writings and Philoſophy *. And with regard to moſt

* *Arnobius*, who had himſelf been a rigid Pagan, and a Man of conſiderable Learning and Acuteneſs, and who, turned Chriſtian, even in the perſecuting Reign of *Diocletian*,

moſt of them, it appears from the Accounts they give us of themſelves, that they had been ſtrongly prejudiced in favour of Paganiſm, in which they had been educated, and which had all worldly Advantages on its ſide: and it was by examining into the Chriſtian Religion, and conſidering the Excellency of it, and the Evidences brought for it, that they were convinced; and that at a time when they had the beſt Opportunities of enquiring into the Truth or Falſehood of the original Facts of Chriſtianity; and when, if there had been any Counter-Evidence to be produced, they might eaſily have known it; yea, and at a time when by embracing it they expoſed themſelves to the moſt bitter Reproaches, and moſt grievous Sufferings.

It was a thing ſo well known, that many of the Chriſtians were eminent for their Learning and Knowledge in Philoſophy, and had made an advantageous uſe of it in defence of Chriſtianity, and in refuting and expoſing the Pagan Superſtition and Idolatry, that the Emperor *Julian* thought it one of the beſt Methods he could take to ſubvert Chriſtianity, to ſhut up the Schools,

cletian, taking notice of the wonderful Progreſs of the Chriſtian Religion, obſerves, that Men of great Parts, Orators, Grammarians, Lawyers, Phyſicians, and Philoſophers, relinquiſhing the Sentiments in which they had been educated, embraced the Chriſtian Faith.——*Magnis ingeniis præditi Oratores, Grammatici, Rhetores, Conſulti-juris ac Medici, Philoſophiæ etiam Secreta rimantes, Magiſteria hæc expetunt, ſpretis quibus paulo ante fidebant.* Arnob. adverſ. Gentes, Lib. 2.

Schools, and hinder the Chriſtians from Learning. This Gentleman indeed takes upon him to blame his Politicks in this, and could, it ſeems, have directed him to a better Method of putting a ſtop to the Progreſs of Chriſtianity, *viz.* by opening to the Chriſtians the Schools of the Philoſophers, *p.* 74. But whatever Opinion I may have of our Author's great Sagacity, I apprehend *Julian* and his Adviſers underſtood the State of things at that time much better than he; and were more capable of judging from their own Obſervation, what was the moſt likely way to effect a Deſign they had ſo nearly at heart.

I need not take any particular notice of this Gentleman's Declamation, from *p.* 70, to *p.* 75. to ſhew the Inconſiſtency there is between Chriſtianity and Philoſophy. It certainly argues a very peculiar degree of Aſſurance in this Writer, in the ſame Pamphlet in which he takes occaſion to mention the illuſtrious Names of Lord *Bacon*, Mr. *Boyle* *, Mr. *Locke*, and Sir *Iſaac Newton*, the greateſt Philoſophers of this, or perhaps any Age, to take upon him to pronounce with ſo much Confidence, that there is an irreconcilable

* This excellent Philoſopher, Mr. *Boyle*, has written an admirable Treatiſe, call'd the *Chriſtian Virtuoſo*, on purpoſe to ſhew the good Agreement there is between Experimental (*i. e.* the beſt and ſoundeſt) Philoſophy and Chriſtianity;——And what a Tendency a good Acquaintance with the former hath to diſpoſe a Man for receiving and believing the latter, and diſcerning and acknowledging the Force of its Proofs.

concilable Oppoſition between the Chriſtian Religion and Philoſophy, and that no Man can be a good Chriſtian and Philoſopher at once. They were Chriſtians that have ſet Philoſophy on the nobleſt Foundation, that have carried it to the greateſt Height, and enrich'd it with the moſt important Diſcoveries. And tho' he inſinuates, that thoſe of the meaneſt Underſtandings are beſt qualified for believing, and have moſt *of true Zeal*, and *Acuteneſs of Spiritual Diſcernment*, and ſeems willing to claim the *brighteſt Votaries of the rational Claſs* on the ſide of Infidelity; yet nothing is capable of a clearer Proof, than that the moſt diſtinguiſhed Names in the Republick of Letters, thoſe that have diſcovered the greateſt Strength of Reaſon, and Compaſs of Knowledge, have been Perſons that have ſhewn a high Eſteem for Chriſtianity. And it has been no ſmall pleaſure to me to obſerve within the compaſs of my own Acquaintance, that Men of the beſt Underſtandings, and moſt generous way of thinking I have ever known, as well as of the beſt Characters, and moſt exemplary Morals and Virtues, were the firmeſt Chriſtians. And I muſt confeſs it has given me ſome Emotion, when I have ſeen Perſons every way their Inferiors, no way remarkable for the Goodneſs of their Morals, or any extraordinary Strength of Genius, and that did not ſeem to give themſelves much trouble in cloſe thinking, aſſume a kind of Superiority, merely on

account of their pertly rejecting the Faith of the Goſpel.

There is one thing in his Harangue about the Oppoſition between the Chriſtian Religion and Philoſophy, which it may be proper to take notice of, to ſhew the great Conſiſtency of this Writer. He had in the former Part of his Letter repreſented Reaſon as in an eternal Fluctuation and Uncertainty; that the *Decrees of a human Underſtanding can in their nature have no pretenſion to be irreverſible*; and that the Philoſopher *cannot be certain of his own Conſtancy or laſting Attachment to any Principles*; nor that *his Judgment ſhall be inviolably fixed to one Point*; p. 25, 26. But here he repreſents it as the Character of a Philoſopher, that he *has contracted an inviolable Attachment to certain eſtabliſhed Teſts, and will hear of nothing that does not fall in exactly with what he calls the Laws of Nature, which he has already irreverſibly determined*; and that, he makes *moral Relations the Touchſtone for the Trial of all Truths*; p. 73. What he here offers, ſhews a great Inconſiſtency between this Author and himſelf, but none at all between Chriſtianity and Philoſophy; ſince it is certain, and has often been ſhewn, that the Chriſtian Religion is perfectly conſiſtent with thoſe Laws and Relations; and they that have treated thoſe Laws of Nature and Moral Relations with the greateſt Strength and Clearneſs, and to whom the World is moſt obliged on this head, have been Chriſtian Writers.

This

This Gentleman takes occaſion in his Pamphlet to mention ſeveral great Men, and their Performances. *Stillingfleet*'s *Origines Sacræ*, Dr. *Clark*'s *Demonſtration*, &c. Mr. *Addiſon*'s *Treatiſe of the Chriſtian Religion*; *The Trial of the Witneſſes*; *The Analogy of Reaſon and Revelation*: And by juſt mentioning them in a ſneering way, has no doubt done enough to convince his Readers that they are very inſignificant Things, and that it would be loſt pains to conſider them. So extraordinary a Man is this Author, that one Daſh from his lucky Pen ſhall be of more force than all their learned Writings.

It is pleaſant enough to hear him expreſſing his Concern for the great Prejudice that is done to Chriſtianity, by the carrying on of *Boyle*'s Lectures, which he *cannot avoid* regarding as a *very principal Cauſe of the preſent prevailing Diſpoſition and Turn to Infidelity*; p. 85, 86. And I believe every body is convinced, that if this had really been the Caſe, this Gentleman would not have been ſo forward to complain of it. All that one can gather from what he ſays on this Subject is, that he and his Friends would be very well pleaſed to have thoſe Lectures laid down, which I muſt own with me is a very good Reaſon for their being continued, and a ſtrong Preſumption of their Excellency and Uſefulneſs *.

* As theſe Lectures are deſigned for the Defence of Natural Religion as well as Reveal'd, it ſeems, according to our Author, Reaſoning is equally an Enemy to both.

He declaims very rhetorically, *p.* 87—94. on the Inconſiſtency of the Gentlemen employ'd in carrying on thoſe Lectures, in urging Perſons to a free Examination and Enquiry; and at the ſame time exhorting them to embrace or adhere to the Chriſtian Faith, and ſetting before them the Guilt and Danger of Unbelief. He is pleas'd here to make Speeches for them, which, as he manages the matter, look odd enough; and it would be very eaſy, if any Man were diſpoſed to ſuch an Employment, to make a Speech for this Gentleman himſelf drawn out of the Principles of his Book, that would be much more inconſiſtent and ridiculous. The Principles upon which this Part of his Declamation proceeds, and on which the whole Ridicule is founded, are ſuch as theſe; that the being educated in any Religion, or baptized into it, abſolutely precludes all future Enquiry or Examination; that there can be no fair Examination, where there is not an abſolute Neutrality or Indifferency with regard to the Principles enquired into; and that all Examination neceſſarily ſuppoſes at leaſt a temporary Diſbelief; that whatever is propoſed to Examination or Enquiry may be innocently rejected; and that if a Man may doubt or ſuſpend his Aſſent for a while, he may doubt always; that no Man can without claiming Infallibility exhort another to embrace the Principles he himſelf judges to be true and important, or ſpeak to him of any Danger in rejecting them. Theſe are the Principles here

ſuppoſed,

ſuppoſed, and which he had laid down in the former Part of his Pamphlet. I have diſtinctly conſidered them in my former Letter, and ſhall not now repeat what I there offered. I ſhall only at preſent obſerve, that notwithſtanding this Gentleman's curious Harangue, it is obvious to common Senſe, that when a Man upon the moſt mature Conſideration is ſatisfied by Arguments which he judges good and valid, that ſuch and ſuch Principles are of great importance to the Happineſs of Men, and to the Cauſe of Religion and Virtue in the World, this muſt naturally make him deſirous both to confirm thoſe in the Belief of them, and in a ſuitable Practice, that profeſs to believe them already, and to bring over others to the Belief and Acknowledgment of thoſe Truths, by all the fair Methods of Reaſon and Argument in his power. If he looks upon thoſe Truths to be of great importance, on which much depends, he cannot but repreſent them as ſuch; and if he be a Perſon who has himſelf carefully examined, and upon an attentive Conſideration of the Argument has found the Evidence riſe up ſtrong to his view, it is natural for him to recommend Enquiry to others, in hopes it will have the ſame happy effect upon them. And if he thinks he has reaſon to conclude, that the true Cauſe of their not believing thoſe Truths is their want of conſidering them fairly and impartially, or that it is owing to vicious Prejudices and faulty Diſpoſitions of Mind; then it is very reaſonable for him to warn them

ſeriouſly

ſeriouſly and earneſtly of the bad Conſequences of ſuch a Conduct, in a Matter that he looks upon to be of the higheſt importance. This a Man may conſiſtently do, without claiming the Privilege of abſolute Infallibility.

With regard to this Writer himſelf, any Man that thinks he diſcerns in his way of treating this Subject many Things very unfair and diſingenuous, and unbecoming an impartial Enquirer after Truth; many Things that argue a great Want of Candour, and a mighty Willingneſs to miſrepreſent and ſubvert Chriſtianity at any rate, tho' with it he ſhould ſubvert all Religion; any Man that thinks thus, (and whoſoever carefully conſiders the Tendency of this Pamphlet, and the groſs Miſrepreſentations with which it abounds, will be naturally led to think ſo,) might very conſiſtently, without pretending to Infallibility, admoniſh this Gentleman of the Unjuſtifiableneſs of ſuch a Temper and Conduct, and earneſtly recommend to him a more equal and attentive Examination of the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion and its Evidence; eſpecially conſidering the Declarations made in the Goſpel, concerning the Guilt and Danger of thoſe who, when it is made known to them, diſbelieve and reject it.

Our Author himſelf often mentions thoſe Declarations, but it is manifeſt, that it is only with a deſign to expoſe them, and Chriſtianity on the account of them. And in order to this, he puts the Caſe of Perſons continuing Unbelievers with the beſt Diſpoſitions in the World, after the fulleſt

and

and moſt impartial Conſideration, and whoſe Unbelief is not owing to any Fault on their parts, but is abſolutely unavoidable and invincible. But this is not the Caſe the Goſpel puts. On the contrary, it is ſtill ſuppoſed, that the Unbelievers there condemned are ſuch as love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil; that their Unbelief is owing to faulty Cauſes, to vicious Prejudices and wrong Affections and Diſpoſitions of Mind, to their hardning their Hearts, and ſhutting their Eyes againſt Evidence. This is there ſuppoſed to be the general Caſe of Unbelievers; and their Guilt and Condemnation is repreſented as highly aggravated. If there be any particular Exceptions, they muſt be left to the Mercy and Equity of the ſupreme Lawgiver, but ſuch Exceptions could not be properly taken notice of in the Goſpel-Law. It would not be wiſe or fit, ſuppoſing a well-atteſted Revelation to have been really given from Heaven of great importance to Mankind, to put the Caſe of any Perſon's being excuſable in not believing or receiving it, when fairly laid before him. This would ſoon be abuſed; the believing and receiving it would be looked upon as a Matter of Indifferency, and ſo the Deſign for which that Revelation was given, would be in a great meaſure defeated.

The remaining Part of his Pamphlet has little in it that deſerves Conſideration. He declaims againſt the Methods made uſe of by Magiſtrates, and in the Univerſities, for promoting

the

the Chriſtian Faith, and diſcouraging free Enquiry. *p.* 95——102. And if any wrong or miſtaken Methods have been made uſe of for promoting the Intereſts of Religion, which no doubt has often been the Caſe, I don't ſee that Chriſtianity can be made accountable for them, or by what Logick it can be concluded from thence that it is not a rational Religion. But I think it cannot reaſonably be denied, that ſuppoſing the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion to be beneficial to Society, tending to promote the Practice of Piety, Fidelity, Virtue and good Morals, and that Infidelity tends to ſet Men looſe from Reſtraints, and to encourage Licentiouſneſs, Immorality and Vice, a Magiſtrate that is perſuaded of this may very juſtly encourage the one by all prudent Methods conſiſtent with Liberty and the publick Rights, and diſcountenance the other. Nor can the Univerſities, that have the Care of educating Youth committed to them, be blamed for endeavouring to train them up by Reaſon and Argument, in thoſe Principles, which are moſt for the Good of their Country and of Mankind, and for promoting Religion and Virtue. The ſame may be ſaid with regard to Parents, that have any Concern for the Good of their Children. Nor can any thing be more abſurd than what this Gentleman inſinuates, *p.* 102. as if Parents could not breed up Children in the Principles of Religion, without arrogating to themſelves Infallibility. For if they had only a Probability

of the Truth and Excellency of the Principles of Religion, it would be their Duty to endeavour to inſtil thoſe Principles betimes into the tender Minds of their Children, and would be a very wrong thing to leave them at large in a World, where they are liable to be led into Principles and Practices of the moſt pernicious Tendency, without endeavouring to guard them by good Inſtructions againſt thoſe Principles and Practices.

It is not neceſſary to take particular Notice of the Quotations he produces with ſo much Pomp from Biſhop *Beveridge*; ſince whatever Eſteem we may have for the Learning or Piety of any particular Writer, if he has fallen into any improper Sentiments or Expreſſions, it would not be fair to turn them to the Diſadvantage of Chriſtianity, which is in no wiſe accountable for them. The Book from which our Author quotes theſe Paſſages was written when the Biſhop was very young, and it is not much to be wondered at if there are ſeveral things in it not well digeſted, and written in an unguarded and hyperbolical manner. But ſince in that Book he gives an Account at length both of what he believed and of his Reaſons for believing, it appears that he was far from looking upon the Influence of the Spirit to be, what this Gentleman repreſents it, a blind irrational Impulſe, or to be at all inconſiſtent with believing upon Reaſon and Evidence.

Our Author concludes his Pamphlet with recapitulating and applauding his own Performance, which I hope however will not have the Effect that ſeems to be intended by it. That Man muſt certainly be already very ſtrongly prejudiced in favour of Infidelity, who can be brought to think worſe of the Chriſtian Religion, for the Repreſentations he is pleaſed to make of it. He undertakes indeed to ſhew that *Chriſtianity* is *not founded on Argument*, but any one that reflects on the unfair Arts made uſe of by this Gentleman, and others that have appeared on that Side, and how little of ſolid Reaſoning they have been able to oppoſe to the Defences that have been made for Chriſtianity, will be apt to think, that it may with much greater Juſtice be ſaid, that *Infidelity is not founded on Reaſon or Argument*; and that if it ſpreads among us, which this Writer ſeems to glory in, though I doubt not he mightily exaggerates it beyond the Truth and Reality of the Caſe, it muſt be owing to ſome other Cauſe than fair and impartial Enquiry. Some have been prejudiced againſt Chriſtianity on account of the Ill-conduct of many of its Miniſters and Profeſſors, or of the Abſurdities that have been taught, and the Corruptions that have obtained among thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians. But if this were all, a calm and impartial Conſideration of the Chriſtian Religion in its genuine Purity and Simplicity as laid down in the holy Writings, would be an effectual Preſervative againſt

gainſt this Prejudice. But beſides this, there is in ſome Tempers a ſtrong Affectation of appearing to be Perſons of ſuperior Genius, able to break through the Force of Education, and common Prejudices; and this I doubt not has carried many who were not able to diſtinguiſh themſelves to advantage by their ſuperior Virtues or Abilities, to endeavour to do it by oppoſing and rejecting the Faith of Chriſtians, and on this account aſſuming to themſelves a Judgment and Penetration above the Vulgar, as if they could ſee farther than the reſt of Mankind. But the moſt powerful Prejudice of all againſt Chriſtianity, and which has a much ſtronger Force to incline ſome Perſons to reject it, than any or all the Prejudices in its favour to incline Men to embrace it, is that which ariſes from the Byaſs of their corrupt Luſts and Paſſions. When Men are devoted to any of thoſe Sins, which the Goſpel forbids under the ſevereſt Penalties, they muſt either renounce the Scriptures, or condemn themſelves. A Man that is under the Power of ſtrong vicious Inclinations and depraved Habits, will of courſe be prejudiced againſt a Religion, which if it be true obliges him to counteract and mortify his darling Appetites, and will not ſuffer him to be eaſy in his licentious Courſes, and teaches him to expect a dreadful Puniſhment in a future State, as the Effect of his Ill-conduct in this. His Intereſt and Inclinations naturally bribe his Judgment to pronounce againſt ſuch a Religion,

they give force to every Objection, and will hardly admit him calmly to conſider its Proofs. And therefore in an Age of growing Diſſoluteneſs and Corruption of Manners, it is not very ſurprizing to ſee an Increaſe of Infidelity too.

On the other hand, a Man of real Piety and Virtue, one who is a devout Adorer of the Deity, who endeavours to govern his Paſſions, and is regular in his Life, can ſcarce help approving and wiſhing well to a Religion of ſuch an excellent Tendency, that raiſes him to the moſt ſublime Hopes, that gives him the moſt raviſhing Diſcoveries and Aſſurances of God's rich Grace and Mercy, and of his wonderful Love to Mankind, and of the Glories prepared in a future State, as the Reward of a Life of ſincere Piety and Virtue in this. I will therefore readily own, and let our Author make the moſt of this Conceſſion, that a good Man will be apt to be prejudiced in favour of the Chriſtian Religion. But then this Prejudice, if it muſt be called ſo, is a juſt and reaſonable one. When a Man diſcerns the Characters of divine Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Purity in the Goſpel, when he feels its Suitableneſs to his own Caſe, the happy Effect it has upon himſelf in purifying his Heart and governing his Life, in ſtrengthening good Diſpoſitions, and ingaging him to abound in every good Work, this hath a natural Tendency to convince one of a ſincere and upright Mind, that the Goſpel is not the Work of Impoſtors, that it is worthy of God, and

came

came from him. And it is a great Proof that the Chriſtian Religion is founded in Reaſon and Evidence, when it has both ſuch obvious Characters and Proofs of its Excellency and Divinity, as ſtrike the Minds and internal Senſe of thoſe who are not ſo well able to carry their Views through a long Chain and Series of Reaſonings; and when it is alſo confirmed by ſuch a Variety of Arguments and Evidences, as taken in a more extenſive View are capable of giving Satisfaction to thoſe of the greateſt Leiſure and Penetration. Theſe Reaſons and Evidences have often been repreſented to the World with great Strength and Clearneſs, nor do I find this Writer has offered any thing to prove thoſe Reaſons inſufficient.

I have now obeyed your Commands in communicating my Thoughts to you upon this Pamphlet, and have not left any thing in it unexamined, that ſeemed to me to deſerve Notice. And as this Writer makes ſome ſhew of treating the Subject he has undertaken in a methodical Way, I have, that he might not complain of having his Arguments mangled or not repreſented in their full Force, followed him in the Order which he himſelf has choſen. But tho' I will not deny him the Praiſe of Wit and Ability, yet upon the moſt impartial Conſideration of his Performance, I cannot help ſaying, that an Author that in any other Cauſe would give himſelf ſuch a Liberty of miſrepreſenting Things,

Things, and endeavour to impoſe upon his Reader at the rate this Gentleman has done, or that would treat any other Book as he has done the Scriptures, would be juſtly regarded, as having forfeited all his Credit and Reputation as a fair and candid Writer; and it certainly aggravates it highly, when it is done with a View to miſlead Perſons in a Matter of the higheſt Conſequence. If you think the Remarks I have offered may be of uſe, I ſhall not repent the Pains I have taken in them. I am with a real Eſteem

Your faithful humble Servant.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

Juſt Publiſh'd,

THE FIFTH EDITION of the two following Books [For the Uſe of Families.]

Written BY THE LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MANN, *and ſold by* John Oſborn, *at the* Golden Ball *in* Pater-noſter-Row.

I. THE

KNOWLEDGE and PRACTICE of CHRISTIANITY made eaſy to the Meaneſt Capacities, *&c.*—deſigned for the Benefit and Inſtruction of ſuch CHRISTIANS, as have not well conſidered the Meaning of the Religion they profeſs; Or,—Who *profeſs* to *know* God, but in *Works* do *deny* him.

In ſeveral ſhort and plain Dialogues.

Together with Family and private Meditations and Prayers.

II. A

Short and Plain Inſtruction for the better Underſtanding of the

LORD'S SUPPER,

With the neceſſary Preparation requir'd for the Benefit of YOUNG COMMUNICANTS: And of ſuch as have not well conſidered this Holy Ordinance.

To which is annex'd——The Office of the HOLY COMMUNION: With proper HELPS and DIRECTIONS for joining in every Part thereof with Underſtanding and Benefit.

N. B. Great Allowance will be made by *John Oſborn* to ſuch Perſons as take Numbers of theſe Books, to diſperſe at home, or in our Plantations and Colonies abroad.

BOOKS Printed for R. Hett, *in the* Poultry

1. A Chriſtian Liturgy, or a devout and rational Form of divine Worſhip; compoſed chiefly out of the devotional Parts of the ſacred Scriptures, and the moſt antient Liturgies of the Chriſtian Church, eſpecially thoſe in the Apoſtolical Conſtitutions. To which is prefixed, ſome Obſervations on the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, upon the preſent Way of Worſhip in the Church of *Scotland*, and among the Proteſtant Diſſenters of all Denominations. Together with an earneſt Recommendation of pre-compoſed Forms of divine Worſhip to the latter. By a Proteſtant Diſſenter. Price 1s.

2. A Diſcourſe concerning, I. The true Import of the Words Election and Reprobation; and the Things ſignified by them in the Holy Scriptures. II. The Extent of Chriſt's Redemption. III. The Grace of God; where it is inquired, whether it be vouchſafed ſufficiently to thoſe who improve it not, and irreſiſtibly to thoſe who do improve it; and whether Men be wholly paſſive in the Work of Regeneration? IV. The Liberty of the Will in a State of Trial and Probation. V. The Perſeverance or Defectibility of the Saints; with ſome Reflections on the State of Heathens, the Providence and Preſcience of God. By *Daniel Whitby*, D. D. The ſecond Edition, corrected.

3. Chriſt the Righteouſneſs of his People; or the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith in him. Repreſented in ſeveral Sermons preach'd at the Merchants Lecture at Pinners-Hall. By *Richard Rawlin*. Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of the Committee of the Lecture.